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# **RURAL SOCIOLOGY**

RURAL SOCIOLOGY

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## CONTENTS

EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION . . . . .	ix
PREFACE . . . . .	xi
PREFACE TO REVISED EDITION . . . . .	xiii

### PART ONE THE FOUNDATIONS OF AMERICAN RURAL SOCIETY

I. THE RISE AND NATURE OF THE RURAL PROBLEM IN THE UNITED STATES . . . . .	3
II. THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF AMERICAN RURAL LIFE . . . . .	24
III THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF AMERICAN RURAL LIFE ( <i>Continued</i> ) . . . . .	43
IV. THE PEOPLE OF THE RURAL UNITED STATES . . .	57
V LIFE AND LABOR ON THE AMERICAN FARM . . .	89
VI LAND AND SOCIETY . . . . .	110
VII THE PSYCHOLOGY OF FARM LIFE . . . . .	136
VIII THE RURAL STANDARD OF LIVING . . . . .	162
IX. THE RURAL STANDARD OF LIVING ( <i>Continued</i> ) . .	182

### PART TWO RURAL SOCIAL INSTITUTIONS AND RURAL SOCIAL PROBLEMS

X THE PROBLEM OF ISOLATION AND SOCIALIZATION IN RURAL LIFE . . . . .	207
XI. THE PROBLEM OF TENANCY AND OWNERSHIP IN THE UNITED STATES . . . . .	233
XII THE RURAL FAMILY . . . . .	268
XIII. RURAL YOUTH . . . . .	290
XIV THE FARM RESIDENCE . . . . .	314
XV THE PROBLEM OF RURAL EDUCATION . . . . .	340
XVI THE PROBLEM OF THE RURAL SCHOOL . . . . .	370
XVII. AN ADEQUATE RURAL EDUCATION PROGRAM . . .	390
XVIII THE PROBLEM OF RURAL HEALTH . . . . .	415

XIX	THE PROBLEM OF THE RURAL CHURCH . . . . .	445
XX	AN ADEQUATE RURAL RELIGIOUS PROGRAM . . . . .	471
XXI	THE PROBLEM OF RURAL RECREATION . . . . .	497
XXII	RURAL ART . . . . .	521

*PART THREE. THE AMERICAN FARMER AND  
HIS SOCIETY*

XXIII.	THE FARMER AND HIS COMMUNITY . . . . .	549
XXIV	RURAL COMMUNITY ORGANIZATION AND AGENCIES . . . . .	566
XXV	THE FARMER AND HIS TOWN . . . . .	590
XXVI	TOWN-COUNTRY RELATIONS . . . . .	604
XXVII.	THE FARMER AND HIS GOVERNMENT . . . . .	625
XXVIII	LARGE FARMERS' ORGANIZATIONS IN THE UNITED STATES—A FARMER MOVEMENT . . . . .	653
XXIX	THE FARMER AND CIVILIZATION . . . . .	682
	INDEX . . . . .	699

## FIGURES

1. LOCATION OF FARM TENANTS IN THE UNITED STATES: 1930 . . . . .	234
2. LOCATION OF ALL COUNTIES WITH MORE THAN 90 PER CENT TENANCY . . . . .	244
3. TENANCY RATES PER GEOGRAPHIC DIVISIONS 1930 . .	245
4. RATE OF TENANCY IN DIFFERENT AGRICULTURAL REGIONS OF THE UNITED STATES . . . . .	249
5. COOPERATIVE EXTENSION SYSTEM IN RELATION TO HOME IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS . . . . .	284
6. AVERAGE VALUE OF FARM DWELLINGS BY STATES, FEDERAL CENSUS, 1930 . . . . .	319
7. COUNTIES OR DISTRICTS, WHOLLY OR IN LARGE PART RURAL, WITH LOCAL HEALTH SERVICE UNDER DIRECTION OF WHOLE-TIME COUNTY HEALTH OFFICERS, JANUARY 1, 1931 . . . . .	441
8. 1058 ABANDONED RURAL CHURCHES IN OHIO . . . . .	452
9. DISTRIBUTION OF 3291 RURAL CHURCHES IN OHIO, WITH NON-RESIDENT PASTORS . . . . .	464
10. SUGGESTED PLAN OF ORGANIZATION FOR A COMMUNITY COUNCIL . . . . .	581
11. MISSOURI STANDARD COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION . . . .	582
12. URBAN TRADE TOWNS AND THEIR TRADE AREAS . . . .	607
13. CHENEYVILLE TRADE AREA . . . . .	608
14. TRADE AREAS OF DANE COUNTY, WISCONSIN . . . . .	608
15. ZONES OF INFLUENCE FOR THE CITY OF MADISON, WIS- CONSIN . . . . .	609
16. THE STRUCTURE OF THE VILLAGE COMMUNITY . . . .	610
17. CURVES SHOWING THE CRUDE RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN PRICES OF FARM PRODUCTS AND THE RISE AND FALL IN FARM ORGANIZATION MEMBERSHIPS . . . . .	655
18. SHOWING ORGANIZATION MEMBERSHIPS . . . . .	663
19. SHOWING CUMULATIVE MEMBERSHIP OF FARMERS' ORGAN- IZATIONS, INCLUDING COMMODITY ORGANIZATIONS . .	671



## EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION

IN our industrial-urban civilization the problems of rural living too often fail to receive the attention and study properly due them in consideration of society's inevitable dependence on agriculture. Intermittent study of agricultural problems has followed upon the intermittent pressure of farmers for attention to their needs and ideas. Already the physical side of farm life and agricultural production has shown improvement and important gains, but not until our schools and colleges devote more careful attention to the social side of farm living will our rural civilization improve and develop to its proper relationship with city living. In some fields of economic and physical rural welfare the next forward step waits on advance in rural social organization.

The present book is a systematic treatment of rural sociology and social problems. Professor Taylor has brought to his task extensive research experience in rural surveys, an intimate understanding of rural social relationships and a broad scholarly knowledge of social and economic theory. All the major problems of rural living are here dealt with in a scientific manner and yet the book does not lack in literary style and imaginative quality. Throughout the work there runs a current of unusual insight because the social psychology of rural problems is everywhere recognized as a basic element in the situation. The treatment is therefore thoroughly sympathetic without detracting from the critical and scholarly character of its descriptive analysis.

F. STUART CHAPIN





## PREFACE

THE field of rural sociology has developed rapidly during the last fifteen years. Few systematic college text books have appeared during that time. Information and knowledge in the field of rural social life warrant an attempt to bring together a consideration of outstanding specific problems of rural life and the general principles of the science of sociology. It is my hope that some such contribution has been made in this volume.

I have not deemed it necessary to include, either at the ends of chapters or in an appendix, an elaborate bibliography. Such was necessary a few years ago when specific information in this field could be had only from scattered sources. Citations to other treatises in rural sociology and to supplementary and ramifying fields of knowledge are made in foot notes at the proper places.

In a number of instances I have presented information gathered by myself and my students during the last ten years. Much of this information has not appeared elsewhere. Some of it has. In a few instances the chief contents of chapters have previously appeared in *Rural America* and *Social Forces*. In each of these cases the editors knew of my intention to use later the materials in this book.

I have made liberal use of materials and ideas from other books in rural sociology and general sociology. I desire to take this occasion to thank the authors of these books for their materials. In every case I have tried to give credit by means of citations to their work.

I desire especially to mention the assistance that has been rendered me by my two sisters E. Grace Taylor and Ethel Mae Taylor for reading a portion of the manuscript, by my colleagues Professor W. A. Anderson for reading all the manuscript, and Professor A. J. Honeycutt for reading a portion of manuscript, by my wife for assisting in reading proof, and by Professor F. Stuart Chapin, editor of this series.

CARL C. TAYLOR



## PREFACE TO REVISED EDITION

IN preparation for the revision of this text, the author wrote to eighty university and college teachers who have used the book for classroom purposes, asking for criticisms and suggested changes. The reviews of the book, published in various journals and periodicals, also were again carefully studied. In the revision there has been no attempt to eliminate all the sections and statements criticized or to amend the book in all the ways suggested. To have done so, had the author's judgment so dictated, would have been impossible, due to the fact that the suggestions and criticisms made were diverse and even conflicting. However, from the two sources mentioned many helpful suggestions were obtained which have been utilized in the revision.

As was the case in preparing the first edition, the author has kept carefully in mind that this is a *textbook*, not a research monograph. It is written primarily for classroom use. The addition of new chapters, the rearrangement of other chapters, the inclusion of "Questions for Discussion," and the greater number of citations in the collateral source materials are given to improve the book for classroom use.

A special word should be added concerning the "Selected Collateral Source Materials." They constitute what their caption signifies. They are not made up primarily of sources which the author has cited in footnotes, although they cover some of these citations. They include carefully selected citations which supplement what has been discussed in the chapter in each instance. Therefore, if teachers assign them or students read them, there will be added to the course in which the book is being used as a text, many data and viewpoints not included in the body of the text.

The questions at the end of each chapter are not quiz questions; they are not intended to be "leading" questions. They are questions for discussion. It is assumed that the discussion will evolve out of a study of this book and of the collateral source materials, the contributions of the teacher giving the course, and the knowledge, experience and viewpoints of the students.

The author cannot thank the numerous colleagues, individually, in the field of rural sociology who have made constructive suggestions for the improvement of the text. Therefore he must thank them collectively through the medium of this preface. He does desire to express his especial appreciation to Professor W. A. Anderson, of Cornell University, and Professor C. C. Zimmerman, of the Harvard University, for special criticisms, to Messrs C. P. Loomis, I. R. LaCamp, and Dallas Mallison, at one time graduate students at North Carolina State College, for mechanical assistance and frank criticism, and my wife for assistance in making the index.

June, 1933

CARL C. TAYLOR

*PART ONE*

THE FOUNDATIONS OF  
AMERICAN RURAL SOCIETY



# RURAL SOCIOLOGY

## CHAPTER I

### THE RISE AND NATURE OF THE RURAL PROBLEM IN THE UNITED STATES

#### ATTEMPTS TO RESOLVE ALL RURAL PROBLEMS INTO ONE PROBLEM

**Concern Regarding Rural Social Problems Relatively Recent.**—It is strangely interesting that practically no real concern for the social problems connected with agriculture was voiced in this country until the present century. George Washington and others of his time showed great concern about plant and animal breeding and even soil culture, and by the middle of the nineteenth century the troublesome economic problems connected with agriculture were being brought to the country's notice by the farmers themselves. The social condition of farm people received some attention from Andrew Jackson and Lincoln, but it was not until great farmers' organizations, like the Grange and the Alliance, had struggled with economic and political agricultural problems and until practically the entire country had been settled, that any great leader in public life gave serious thought to rural social problems. The purpose of this chapter is to present a summary of the rise of a national consciousness concerning the social problems of those engaged in agriculture.

**The Problem of Urbanization.**—The first rural social problem to receive general popular consideration in this country was the drift of the rural population to the city, a process which has been going on at a rapid rate for the last thirty or forty years. Thirty years ago the "drift to the city" and the "rural problem" were practically synonymous terms in discussions of rural life. The universal feeling was that this cityward movement was leaving a decadent civilization on the farms—decadent because the city was robbing the farm of all its best minds and most ambi-



#### 4 RISE AND NATURE OF THE RURAL PROBLEM

tious people. The rural problem, from this point of view, was "how to keep the boy on the farm," "how to retard the process of urbanization," and "how to uplift and regenerate rural civilization."

There has never been any serious attempt to promote a "back to the farm" movement, and there is small likelihood that such a movement would meet with much success. Although the drift to the city has been real enough, and is still going on, it does not, in any of its immediate aspects, present a serious rural problem today, for there is nothing in it which in and of itself is keeping our agricultural population from performing efficiently its share of society's work. Both the total annual farm production and the output per acre are greater than ever before. In 1919, at the peak of farm prices and prosperity, the total value of our farm products was \$19,856,000,000,<sup>1</sup> and the average for the fifteen years from 1915 to 1930, including farm price deflation as well as inflation, has been \$15,216,000,000 per year. Production per acre has increased one-half of one per cent annually in the last twenty-five years.<sup>2</sup> New England farms, although said to be suffering seriously from soil depletion and the cityward migration of their inhabitants, produced twenty-five per cent more of their eight leading crops in the ten years between 1909 and 1919 than in the decade between 1866 and 1876. Efficiency in farming, measured by output per worker, has increased steadily, it doubled during the fifty years from 1870 to 1920, and in grain production in 1927 it was 102 per cent greater than in 1870.<sup>3</sup>

But it is production per worker and not per acre which gives the best measure of the adequacy and efficiency of agriculture, and this is larger than for any farm population in the world. When the American farmer was compared with those of other countries, it was found that he produced 2.3 times as much per man as the English farmer, 2.5 times as much as the Belgian and German, 3.2 times as much as the French, and six times as much as the Italian.<sup>4</sup>

Farmers are not sentimentally concerned about the rural migra-

<sup>1</sup> *Year Book of American Agriculture*, 1920, p. 806.

<sup>2</sup> *American Year Book of Agriculture*, 1919, pp. 17-25.

<sup>3</sup> Tolley, H. R., *Proceedings of Land-Grant College Association*, February, 1927, p. 243.

<sup>4</sup> Butterfield, K. L., *The Farmer and the New Day*, The Macmillan Company, New York, 1919, p. 10.

tion to the city. While they may not be universally cognizant of the urbanization of industry and the monetary rewards and standards of living possible therefrom, they are gradually realizing that there is a factor in our present economic regime—be it industrialization, urbanization, or something else—which is preventing them from securing financial or cultural returns equal to those obtained by other occupational groups in this country. Although they may not actually analyze all of the conditions in a cause-and-effect relationship, they are vaguely aware of an unsatisfactory adjustment to modern standards of living, and they are keenly aware of their unfavorable position in comparison with that of the upper classes of the urban population.

That the industrialization and urbanization of America have had their effect on farm organization, farm progress, and even farm prosperity can, however, hardly be denied. Our cities have grown much more rapidly in both population and production than our open country, city occupations and industries have regularly outbid farming for man and money power. The widespread knowledge of these facts has done much to give city populations, city standards of living, and city culture a dominant position in the thinking and ambition of the nation. The urbanization of our whole national life has been going on in this way almost from the beginning of our national existence, and has been moving with increasing acceleration during the last seventy or eighty years.

There are two possible explanations of this urbanization of our economic and social life. One is that the farmers in the past may have produced more nearly the maximum amount of their share of economic goods than did people in other occupations and industries. If it is the overproduction of the present that is the cause of the meager rewards for the producers of raw goods, the remedy lies in holding farm production down until the income from it is sufficient to enable farmers to compete successfully for labor and money power in this country's open markets. The other explanation may be that the city and its industries are not competing in the open markets in accordance with the simple operations of the law of supply and demand, but are so organized that through their power to influence prices they can attract capital out of all proportion to the value and use which society will

## 6 RISE AND NATURE OF THE RURAL PROBLEM

derive from the goods produced.<sup>5</sup> If this is true, then America is urbanized and industrialized to a point and in a way that is dangerous; and nothing but action on the part of the government or of powerfully organized groups of farmers can break the city's monopoly of the time, attention, and energy of the nation.

It is doubtful whether the urbanization of modern society, in the sense of the drift of the population to the cities, can be checked, for the process is an inevitable part of the industrialization of society. Some of the outstanding characteristics of this industrialization are the refining of goods, their distribution in world markets, the development of surpluses, and the constant appearance of new human wants. The cause of urbanization, simply stated, is this. A larger percentage of our population is needed to carry on the refining and distributing processes of society today than yesterday, and probably an even greater percentage will be needed tomorrow. Consequently, unless we want to retard these two economic processes, we do not want to retard the drift to the city to any marked extent. Furthermore, to do this would be to demand a retrenchment in our new and expanding desires for refined goods, which in turn would mean that our rising standard of living would suffer, and our farmers, instead of being better rewarded, would be forced to take lower prices for their products because of the comparative increase in raw products and the comparative decrease in refined products.

Apparently the drift to the city has not thwarted agricultural progress and efficiency to any great degree, nor has the rural population shown any actual decrease in any decade in our national existence.<sup>6</sup> In 1930 there were over two million more people living in rural districts than in 1920, and over four million more than in 1910. With a greater rural population and a greater gross, per capita and per acre production, it is little short of sophistry to assert that the urbanization of America has left in its wake a degenerate rural population—at least as far as numbers and productive capacity are concerned. If the standard of living which we have developed in this country leads us to pay the producers of finished goods and luxuries higher prices than

<sup>5</sup> Quick, Herbert, *The Real Trouble with the Farmer*, The Bobbs-Merrill Company, Indianapolis, 1924

<sup>6</sup> The farm population, and thus actual farmers, have decreased, but not rural population.

the producers of raw materials secure, then there is a condition for which urbanization is more or less directly responsible, for the production of such goods and luxuries is an entirely urban process. But this is not the rural problem, or any part of it; it is a social problem of national importance. Its solution should be sought by an attack at the consuming end—at the fortunes being amassed from luxuries—and not by sending more people to farms to compete with the farmer, or by closing urban industries and life to farm boys and girls.

**Rural Isolation.**—Another attempt to condense rural problems into a single problem has given rise to the term “rural isolation.” Its supporters argue that the farmer is conservative, superstitious, orthodox, individualistic, and narrow as a result of being out of the stream of civilization, that the boys and girls are leaving the farm because of the isolation and loneliness of rural life, and that the farmer is beaten in the markets and legislative forums of the world because this isolation has prevented him from establishing contacts with other farmers and with other classes of people. Although without basis as far as actual evidence is concerned, assertions have even been made that our insanity and suicide rates are abnormally high because of the farm women who cannot stand the loneliness of their life.

Without question, the necessary isolation of life on the farm presents a sharp contrast to the congestion of the city, but whether it is to be more deplored than the latter is doubtful. The fact that it was formerly impossible for farmers to have any outside contacts, either with other farm families or with other occupational groups, was a serious check to agricultural progress, and is probably more truly an index to all rural problems than any other one factor. But although it is uncertain whether the farmer has ever regarded urbanization as his particular problem, he now recognizes his isolation as a problem which he can and must solve through the better means of communication and transportation which have been developed and the wider contacts thus made possible for him. To assume, however, that isolation is the only rural problem, or even the outstanding rural social problem, is to have little conception of the complexity of rural society.

**Rural Cooperation.**—Probably the only other description of the rural problem which has been as widely used as either of the two just discussed is expressed by the words “rural coopera-

## 8 RISE AND NATURE OF THE RURAL PROBLEM

tion"; in fact, during the last two decades it has probably been more thoroughly popularized than either of the others. Not only has it been preached by all claiming an interest in rural welfare, but it has been almost universally adopted by the farmers themselves because they feel that it expresses not a criticism of rural life but a solution of rural problems. They are convinced that they must cooperate not only to secure the new contacts which they have learned to want, but also to carry on their work in accordance with up-to-date methods. Although in some cases cooperation has become almost a religious shibboleth, it is questionable whether it has until recently been more than a working hypothesis. Its greatest value lies in its adoption as a slogan for the solution of the rural problem, and as such it has had great propagandic effect, most of which has made for a more satisfactory and desirable farm life. Without it little would have been accomplished in the past, and doubtless no rural program of the future will omit it. It would, however, be rather meaningless and indefinite to say that the lack of cooperation constitutes the rural problem.

There is probably no other single description of processes and conditions which has caught the popular mind to the same degree as the three just discussed. The "drift to the city" and "rural isolation," as rural conditions, and "cooperation" as a rural program have, to the popular mind, been the essence of the "rural problem." However, these terms are only indexes to conditions far more complex than they indicate, and to rural problems so numerous as to make division and subdivision necessary for the sake of adequate analysis. The rural problem is not one problem, but many, combined and interwoven to such a degree that it is impossible to state it as a single problem or to find a single solution for it.

### THE RISE OF THE RURAL PROBLEM

Two factors are chiefly responsible for the rise of that set of conditions and desires which constitute what is known as the rural problem: (1) the increasing recognition of the differences between urban and rural life, and (2) the change in the rural situation itself. It is not that the breach between rural and urban life has widened, for it has not, but rather that the farmer has become more and more conscious of the advantages city people

enjoy. However, to these two factors a third must be added, viz , the impetus and interest aroused by the institutions and agencies which have been established to study and promote the welfare and efficiency of the farming class. In fact, for the proper comprehension of any or all of the phases of the rural problem, it is necessary to understand the numerous developments which have given rise to and conditioned the nature of the problem.

#### RECOGNITION OF THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN RURAL AND URBAN LIFE

**Contrast between Rural and Urban Life.**—The growing recognition, on the part of the farmer, of the differences between rural and urban life and people has had much to do with his present feeling toward his occupation, for it has led him to the belief that urban life is the more desirable—a belief which is borne out by the rural drift to the cities. People move to the city from the open country for various reasons, but there is always present the conviction that the city provides what they desire individually in a larger measure than does the country. Urban economic opportunities are considered superior, for wages paid wholly in cash and comparatively short working hours are usually not found in farm work. Further, there is always the hope of great wealth, for it is known everywhere that modern industry has opened up business opportunities and developed great fortunes in the city, but the fact that only relatively few city dwellers participate in these opportunities and fortunes is not so widely known. Even the fact that thousands of rural people find themselves living in undesirable conditions in the city cannot overbalance, in many people's minds, its lure in the form of superior schools, churches, cultural opportunities, varied amusements, bright lights, street cars and sidewalks.

Although the following statistics are not as comprehensive as might be desired, they probably represent the facts fairly. They indicate that the vast majority of the subjects of the various studies voluntarily moved from the farm because they believed that urban life, either in one specific aspect or as a whole, was to be preferred to rural life.

A study made by the writer gives interesting data on the actual causes which, within the last ten years, led 1470 heads of families and individuals without families to move from the open country

## 10 RISE AND NATURE OF THE RURAL PROBLEM

to towns in Missouri, Iowa, Illinois, Kansas, Oklahoma, Arkansas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Tennessee, North Carolina, and Virginia. Greater economic opportunities were given by 524 as the chief reason for moving, 396 made the change because of the better educational facilities offered for themselves or their children; 226 wanted a livelier and better organized social life, while 232 moved because of old age or because they had become financially able to live in comparative idleness during the remainder of their lives. The other 92 families gave the following reasons. "failing health or incapacity to do farm work," "marriage with men with city occupations," "death of the farm entrepreneur or bread winner"

Smuck and Yoder gathered data in three counties in the State of Washington on 378 people over sixteen years of age who had migrated from farms to towns and cities. According to this study, "The reasons for the migration to the city as given by the persons migrating are largely economic. By far the largest number of persons left either because they did not have the means to begin farming for themselves, or because they thought they could make more money in the city"<sup>7</sup> Relatives of 199 of these individuals stated in 71.9 per cent of their answers that the subjects either "disliked farming," could make more money in the city, had city interests, or were in bad health.<sup>8</sup>

**The Development of Closer Rural-Urban Contacts.**—One of the important factors which has precipitated discussion and thought on the numerous social problems of rural communities, and which lies back of the belief in the desirability of city life, is the more or less sudden development of a number of means of communication between country and city. The rural telephone, which in 1907 numbered almost 1,500,000 and by 1930 had doubled in number;<sup>9</sup> the rural free delivery, the interurban and the automobile, and, more recently, the radio have brought the two groups almost face to face. The result has been the sudden rise of the consciousness, on the part of the rural population, that the city alone is enjoying many of the benefits made possible by modern civilization—a consciousness not of any decadence in rural

<sup>7</sup> Smuck, A. A., and Yoder, F. R., "A Study of Farm Migration in Selected Communities in the State of Washington," *Bulletin No. 233*, State College of Washington, Agricultural Experiment Station, Pullman, 1929, p. 39.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 17.

<sup>9</sup> Statistics furnished by the American Telephone and Telegraph Company, New York City.

life itself, but of its failure to supply the advantages resulting from the wider contacts inherent in urban life. The standards and desires which rural people now have as the result of this improved communication have given rise to the additional problem of their attainment and fulfillment

### **The Diminishing Self-Sufficiency of the American Farm.**

—It was a psychological impossibility for the rural problem to present itself to the minds of country people as long as American farms were predominantly self-sufficient, and to say that the self-sufficiency of the farm is diminishing is only another way of saying that farm life is becoming an interrelation of town and country life. The division of labor and the differentiation of industrial processes automatically removed many types of work from the farm to the city. Spinning, weaving, cobbling, tailoring, and the making of tools and implements are now definitely urban industries, even such processes as sewing, canning, butter making and baking have been transferred to some degree from the farm home to the factory, mill, and bakeshop, and others will undoubtedly follow. On the whole, this differentiation has been beneficial to the farmer and his family, for it has left him free to specialize in the production of raw materials, and this specialization accounts in no small way for his increased efficiency.

Furthermore, from the sale of his products and the purchase, from others, of goods for his own consumption he can enjoy a wider selection of better goods than was ever possible under a system whereby he supplied all of his own and his family's needs from his own fields, flocks, and herds. In other words, his specialization in the production of raw materials makes him dependent on others for his finished goods, he is more efficient under this system, but he is less self-sufficient. This dependence on others necessitates outside contacts, mainly urban, and is thus an additional source of his increased knowledge of and interest in urban people and processes.

### **The Farmer's Desire for a Status Equal to the Urbanite's.**

—However, the interest which the farmer now has in the city is not confined solely to the goods he buys there, for even beyond his desire for the better cultural and social advantages offered by the city is a growing consciousness that his status as a farmer lacks certain opportunities which urban dwellers have. The people who



are permitted by circumstance and opportunity to partake of these urban advantages are generally considered more sophisticated, more polite and more civil because of them. Although farm people for the most part do not believe that they are actually inferior to urban people, they know that society at large considers their status inferior, and while they resent this attitude, they acknowledge it and are striving to alter both it and the conditions responsible for it. They wish, and rightly so, to be of equal status with others, and this desire and its satisfaction are part of the rural problem.

#### THE CHANGE IN THE RURAL SITUATION ITSELF

The factors thus far mentioned which have served to bring about the rural problem are mainly psychological and social. However, these are not wholly responsible, for others, more historical, geographical, and physical in nature, have contributed materially.

**The Loss of Soil Fertility.**—While rural people are aware of the advantages the other half of society enjoys, they are equally aware that the rural situation itself is radically different from that of fifty or even twenty years ago. The loss of soil fertility, with the incident possibility of the destruction of the very foundation of farming, has recently become a problem of grave significance.<sup>10</sup>

It is no longer possible in this country to raise crops merely by planting seeds, for the long period of cultivation and the methods followed—or the lack of them—have robbed the soil of much of its native fertility, in certain sections even depleting it entirely of its vital elements. Such land must now either be encouraged to produce by the use of commercial fertilizers or be given over to use as pastures, meadows, and forests. In some areas it has been necessary to abandon entirely land which formerly produced good crops, as in the case of the five million acres of formerly good farm land in the southern states. The farmer can no longer mine the soil, he must husband and nurture it; and the realization of this fact has given him and the nation as a whole an attitude toward farming and its future, and toward the farmer's function, which is far different from any previous point of view—an attitude of serious questioning and analysis, the development of

<sup>10</sup> East, E. M., *Mankind at the Crossroads*, Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, 1923, chap. iv.

which has done much to set the stage for the entrance of the rural problem

**The Limits of the Agricultural Frontier Already Reached.**

—As long as there were new and fertile lands, as long as there was a "Great West" to provide untouched land, the exhaustion of the soil in the old agricultural areas was of little moment, raising no immediate problem beyond that of the transportation, first, of the people to the land and, second, of the crops to the markets in the already developed areas. When, however, the migrant tide of land seekers reached the Pacific coast and turned back upon itself, the fact that there were limits to our agricultural expansion became apparent, and from this time on our problem has been to supply our present and future population with food from the areas already under cultivation, or at least from those within the boundaries of our population areas. It was at this time in our national history that the tragedy of soil depletion was fully realized. Skimming and mining the soil were no longer profitable, and as a result there arose the problem of checking the process and, if possible, repairing the damage already done. Farms decreased in size, population in the rural districts grew denser, and many of the younger men and women who would formerly have moved west and continued farming began to drift cityward.

The passing of the frontier and the consequent increasing density of the population in rural areas lessened to some extent the isolation of the individual farmer. His neighbors were on every hand, a village might spring up at his very door, and great cities developed near him. All these had their influence on him, he became a different type of man from the old frontiersman, for his contacts with others were increased, and his life became more complex in every way, calling on him to make new adjustments and to solve new problems. *It is these new adjustments to these new problems which are the very essence of the rural problem.*

**The Influence of the Increasing Magnitude of the United States on the Rural Problem.**—At about the same time that these adjustments and problems were being recognized by the farmer, we were as a nation rising to a place as a world power, due largely to the development of our factories. Our great export trade had, prior to 1900, already given us a recognized standing with other nations, and for some time we had been playing a

## 14 RISE AND NATURE OF THE RURAL PROBLEM

large part in world production, but it was in the production of raw materials which were supplementary to the great manufacturing enterprises of other countries. When we became a great industrial nation, our business enterprises began to compete with theirs for the raw materials produced on our farms, and this forced these countries to recognize us as competitors, which had hitherto been unnecessary.

American farm production became an issue for discussion in many circles outside of the farming communities themselves, and some of our larger cities established agencies for encouraging and assisting the development of the areas from which they obtained their raw materials. The railroads and express companies, recognizing the importance of the farm enterprise to them, established agricultural extension departments. Our own manufacturers became keenly interested in the farming enterprise, since they looked upon it as the whole world had up to that time looked upon America, that is, as the producers of the raw materials essential to the maintenance of factory enterprises, and foreign manufacturers were even more keenly interested in its efficiency and future because of the twofold market now open to it. Until this wider interest in farm activities and production developed, any statesman who pleaded the cause of the American farmer was considered a politician out for the farm vote. But the vastly greater importance of agriculture became apparent as the problem of the American farm became of both national and international concern as the future source of the supply of raw materials for the factories, and of the food and clothing supplies for the peoples of the world.

In addition to the national and international interest created, our rise to a world power gave the farmer himself a deeper and clearer appreciation of his function and value to society, for when the nations of the world recognized the United States as a world power, they incidentally recognized the American farmer in a very special way. Moreover, his closer relationship to other industries aroused his interest in their activities, and the protective tariff and the other measures enacted for the protection of manufactures made him take a deeper interest in governmental activities, not all of which were of unquestioned good for him. He realized, in addition, that other industries, already well established, were bidding against him for the capital and investment power of the

nation This new interest and recognition aroused in the farmer by our rise to a world power have created for him still other problems and adjustments, for he now sees clearly that he is of great significance to the nation and the world, and that they, in turn, are of no small significance to him.

**Influence of Rural Welfare Institutions and Agencies Established for the Study of Rural Problems.**—Not least among the causes of the recognition of the rural problem was the establishment of various agencies and institutions for the purpose of discovering and solving farm problems These agencies, some of which have been working steadily and with increased effectiveness for the past eighty years,<sup>11</sup> have striven to convince the farmers, as well as the rest of the population, of the fundamental importance of the agricultural enterprise; they have projected, developed and expanded programs which include every phase of farm experience, from those dealing with the most technical farm processes to those intended to propagate and develop rural social institutions and ideas The increasing number of such agencies, their ever enlarging programs, and their constant efforts are bound to bear fruit An investigation by the United States Department of Agriculture reported 65 national, 143 interstate, and 1761 state agricultural organizations in 1920<sup>12</sup> Their increase has been pronounced in the last decade, but, as far as the author can learn, there has been no authoritative survey since 1920 which covers any but cooperative business associations, there being 12,000 of the latter in 1930.<sup>13</sup> Very recently the great farm organizations—the American Farm Bureau Federation, the Grange, the Farmers' Union, and the extensive Growers' Cooperative Marketing Associations, for example—have served to heighten the rural consciousness of hundreds of thousands of farmers

These agencies and institutions have also had the support of the government and have been able to increase the effectiveness of the laws passed by Congress. A series of national legislative acts initiated as far back as 1861 took on added significance after 1890 under the rapidly expanding programs and appropriations

<sup>11</sup> Bailey, L. H., *Cyclopedia of American Agriculture*, vol. iv, p. 328.

<sup>12</sup> Taylor, H. C., *Directory of American Agricultural Organizations*, Government Printing Office, Washington, D. C., 1920

<sup>13</sup> *Yearbook of Agriculture*, 1930, p. 1080.

## 16 RISE AND NATURE OF THE RURAL PROBLEM

undertaken by these agencies. In 1889 the Department of Agriculture was accorded an executive standing and its head was made a Cabinet member.

In 1907 President Roosevelt appointed a Commission on Country Life, the purpose of which is clearly stated in his introduction to the Commission's official report:

"The Commission was appointed because the time has come when it is vital to the welfare of the country seriously to consider the problems of farm life. So far the farmer has not received the attention that the city worker has received and has not been able to express himself as the city worker has done. The problems of farm life have received very little consideration and the result has been bad for those who dwell in the open country, and therefore bad for the whole nation."<sup>14</sup>

Since the publication of this report, every problem investigated or discussed by the Commission has been the subject of further extensive research, both official and private, and the findings of this research have served to define further the elements of the rural problem and to make both urban and rural people conscious of them.

The American Country Life Association was organized in Baltimore in 1918, its purpose being ". . . to facilitate discussions of the problems and objectives of country life and the means of their solution and attainment; to further the efforts and increase the efficiency of agencies and institutions engaged in this field, to disseminate information calculated to promote better understanding of country life, and to aid in rural improvement."<sup>15</sup> This Association, through its national conference held each year, brings together several hundred people interested in all phases and problems of rural life, and represents practically every organization which devotes any or all of its program to rural life.

### RURAL WELFARE

**The Relation of Welfare to Efficiency.**—The rural problem is one of rural efficiency and rural welfare, and these in turn are two aspects of the same problem. This is true from the view-

<sup>14</sup> *Report of the Commission on Country Life*, Sturgis and Walton Company, New York, 1911, pp. 9-10.

<sup>15</sup> See *Annual Proceedings of National Country Life Conference*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1919.

point not only of sentiment, which holds that there can be no efficiency if people's lives are not wholesome and happy, but also of practicality, for maximum production cannot be attained without efficiency. Regardless of whether rural efficiency is measured in terms of production or of farm life, it constitutes a problem of concern to the nation as well as to the agricultural population itself.

The frequent use of the word welfare in connection with "uplift" or "charity" programs has to some extent robbed it of its wider significance, but as used in this section, it is not intended to signify either charity or sentimental uplift, but to represent all the good things of life for which enlightened people strive. Surely in this sense there is a problem of rural welfare, for rural people, like everyone else, are struggling to participate in these good things, and since desirable things are to be had from all over the earth and from people other than themselves, as well as from their own neighborhood and community life, the essence of the farmers' welfare problem is how to establish the necessary wider contacts with others, draw from these sources, and develop their home and community life.

**The Attainment of the Good Things of Life.**—Are these desirable things to be found only in the city? Although rural people as a whole would strongly resent an affirmative answer to this question, it cannot be denied that thousands of them have moved permanently to the city, and other millions travel countless miles each week between their farm homes and nearby towns to shop, visit, and amuse themselves. Far from criticizing those rural people whose efficient organization of their work leaves them leisure for these things, we wish to raise the question of whether the farmer can and should develop in the open country the facilities, institutions, and agencies for satisfying his legitimate desires for these modern conveniences. It is up to him, as part of his problem of rural welfare, to decide whether all of his needs and desires can be thus satisfied. Is it physically possible to supply these facilities in the open country? Is it desirable to duplicate, at a far higher cost, the machinery necessary for them and which is already available in practically every city? He has another alternative: to combine the facilities offered him by town and city with those which are inherent in his farm environment or which can best be developed in the open country. There can be no ob-

jection to this latter procedure, least of all by the farmer, for he is already following it. The open country is his to own, the town is his to use as he sees fit, and his welfare depends on the efficiency with which he uses both of them to produce the utilities which will satisfy the legitimate desires of his modern life.

**The Increase in Outside Contacts.**—As has already been stated, the relative isolation of country people is more nearly an index of all rural social problems than any other one thing. No civilization has ever developed in isolation, for it is by means of contacts that human society, and the personality and character of the individuals composing it, develop. Opportunity for such contacts is afforded by travel and literature, and those who enjoy such contacts acquire a breadth of mind and of thinking. The pioneer husbandman was devoid of opportunities for such contacts; the modern farmer has developed many of them and wants more, and securing them is a part of his welfare problem. The modern means of transportation and communication have given him a taste of cosmopolitan life in bringing him in contact with the life of other people. Through these means he has learned what others are enjoying, and he is aware that his share of these advantages is smaller than that of other sections of the population.

**The Elimination of Stultifying Factors in the Rural Environment.**—Rural life is, for the most part, happy and buoyant, lived in the out-of-doors in contact with and stimulated directly by nature. From childhood to old age the rural dweller probably enjoys greater personal freedom than any other individual in modern civilization. His life is not restricted mechanically—he is not subject to the absolute and minute routine machine process of the factory, or to its smoke and din, nor is he forced to live in the congestion of the city slums. But this does not say that there are not forces and factors in his environment which tend to stultify his life and, in some cases, actually harm him.

As has been said, the farmer works direct with nature, but he has to take it as he finds it. He does not level the hills or fill the valleys or bridge the creeks and rivers on his farm, on the contrary, he works over the hills and valleys as they are, and, indeed, he must preserve the natural formation of the land if it is to give the maximum yield. His materials for production are not provided for him as are those of the factory worker; many of his tools cannot be completely mechanized, which means that he must

exert physical strength in using them. The severity of the climate and season under which he is often compelled to work cannot be lessened by regulation by artificial light and heat, as it is in factories and other urban industries. All of these demand from him very exacting adjustments to the forces of nature, and the result is the exact opposite of the exaltation which normally comes from the stimulation and beauties of outdoor life. These are the stultifying influences of nature—forces so inherent in the process of farming that they cannot be eliminated, but which the farmer must seek to decrease by the efficient organization of his farm and the wider use of machinery and modern farming technologies.

A proper appreciation and understanding of the psychological effects of better adjustments to and better use of physical environment offers a part of the solution to this problem. This can be achieved through making possible for the farmer a certain amount of relief from his work; he must have some leisure in which opportunities and facilities are available for reading and other educational and cultural pursuits, for recreation and for association with others. Children must not be subjected to these stultifying forces too early or too constantly, and farm work should be so organized as to make it unnecessary for women to share in the actual farming in addition to their already too arduous household tasks.

**The Problem of the Standard of Living.**—The standard of living is the yardstick by which are measured the efficiency and welfare of an individual or a social group. But it seems impossible to some people to determine what constitutes a satisfactory and adequate standard, since individual desires vary so greatly due to the various environments which influence them. However, there are certain needs—food, clothing, shelter, health, education, religion, recreation, and contacts with others—which must be recognized as necessary to life if it is to be worth living. The amount or degree of these essentials may vary according to individual needs and environments, but if any one of them is entirely absent, the life of the individual cannot be said to be complete.

The solution of the rural welfare problem means not only the presence of facilities by which the farmer can secure these essentials, but his realization of their worth to him and the consequent awakening of a desire for them. Since later chapters of this book



are devoted to the various individual elements of the standard of living, a more thorough treatment will not be given at this point.

#### THE PROBLEM OF RURAL EFFICIENCY

**From the National Point of View.**—A democracy, above all other forms of government, demands for its success an enlightened citizenship on the part of all its members, it demands a degree of sympathy with and appreciation of interests other than their own—a knowledge of and interest in national, state, and local affairs. The nation has a further concern in the life and accomplishments of its population, for it wants to be assured that each section is efficiently performing its share of work. Although this does not imply that our country is a taskmaster ruthlessly driving its people at the top speed of production regardless of the consequences, it must, nevertheless, take a keen interest in their productive efficiency. It is perfectly legitimate, therefore, to raise the question as to whether the living conditions of any section of the population are such as to handicap efficient citizenship and national vitality, regardless of whether it is the city slum, the urban leisure class, or the farm population which is under consideration.

The United States is, and will continue to be, fundamentally an agricultural nation, regardless of whether the major portion of its people continues to live on farms and whether our national wealth is measured in terms of farm products or of the products of those industries which could not be maintained without our farms. It was not until a time of crisis like the World War, with its accompanying need for great quantities of food and raw materials, that the country as a whole recognized that farming is one of our great specialized industries. Previous to this time, national attention and encouragement had been given to manufacturing and the transportation industries in far greater degree than to agriculture. The great need for efficient farm production, so universally responded to by our farmers during the War, did more to develop national concern regarding farm efficiency than any other previous occurrence, and the period of agricultural depression which has been almost continuous since 1921 has done even more in this connection than did the agricultural prosperity of 1914 to 1920. "Farm relief" has been a problem of national scope

for the past decade, and it is probably safe to say that rural efficiency from a national viewpoint will never again be absent from this country's thought and programs

**From the Farmer's Point of View.**—Although in times of national stress, such as prevailed during the World War, it is natural that the farmer should measure his efficiency in terms of the nation and even of the world, he cannot be expected to carry on his enterprise under such altruistic stimuli during periods of falling prices and when national and world conditions are more or less normal. From the farmer's viewpoint, efficiency must be measured in terms which apply directly to his farm, his family, and his community, if these terms are to be stimuli which will urge him to greater effort. For him the problem of efficiency is one of adjustment to his own immediate physical and social environment, and he measures his efficiency by whether he is making a success of farming and measuring up to the general standards of agricultural economy. He also considers his family and community life, for he wants to know whether any pathological conditions which may be present are caused by faulty methods of farming or by poor community facilities. Furthermore, he realizes that his contacts with the business enterprises of the city have a direct bearing on the adequacy and efficiency of his life, and if these are harmful or unwholesome, he will consider that this indicates agricultural inefficiency. As has already been said, his horizon is now expanded until his problem of efficiency includes large groups of farmers—in some cases, every farmer in the country. He has to a degree become class conscious, and is interested not only in whether he himself is following a definite program of improvement and advancement, but also in whether farmers as a whole have such a program. His measure of efficiency is thus no longer static, for he is concerned with the increasing future success of his own venture and of agriculture itself.

Even though this point of view is somewhat tinged with selfishness, it is one of the most significant factors of the rural problem, for it indicates that the farmer himself is keenly conscious of his own problems; and, in fact, some of the significant results to which this thought for the future and the consequent progressive measures of efficiency have led may be said to constitute the nature of the rural problem. The modern farmer is looking

to the better use of his soil, to the breeding of better plants and animals, and to the elimination of pests and parasites, all of which not only lead to more efficient farming but make the nation a more powerful agricultural unit and furnish the world a greater amount of foodstuffs and other raw materials. The mechanization of agriculture has already made it possible for an ever growing national population to be supported, at the same time increasing the efficiency of farm work and making it more pleasant, and the farmer is looking to the wider use of farm machinery. He is interested in learning better business methods and in creating more efficient market and exchange relationships—measures which not only are progressive as far as his own efficiency is concerned, but which will undoubtedly eliminate much of the waste which has in the past been attached to these processes.

Finally, rural efficiency must be measured by the criteria of whether farming is a real profession instead of merely an occupation, and whether the farmer is sufficiently successful and broad-minded to be planning for a better home, a better school, a better church, better means of transportation and communication, better health conditions, better recreation facilities, greater opportunity for social contacts, higher moral ideals, and a better community life in all of its varied phases

**The Influence of Farming on Other Nation-wide Occupations.**—The growing interest in farming on the part of other industries and occupations indicates beyond question how thoroughly agriculture is woven into all of business, although this interest is often interpreted by the farmer solely as an attempt to fix the prices for his produce. However valid his position on this point may be, other business enterprises are forced to include agriculture in their business calculations, and from this it follows that these other businesses cannot be omitted from any consideration of the nature of the rural problem

Nothing is more foolish than to consider the rural problem as a single simple problem. The destiny of a rural population of over fifty millions and the future of our nation rest far more upon the growing consciousness of its importance, its thorough analysis, and a deliberate attempt at its solution, than upon the countless other problems to which students of society, statesmen, and the general public have given serious attention.

### QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

- 1 The rural people of the United States are living better today than in any previous generation. Why, then, should there be an increase in the number of rural problems?
- 2 Is the drift of the rural population to the city good or bad?
- 3 The statement is often made that agriculture is more fundamental than any other enterprise. Is this true? Explain your answer.
- 4 What is meant by the phrase, "the urbanization of people's minds"?
- 5 It has recently been said that "the isolation of rural people is a thing of the past." Is this statement true? Explain fully.
- 6 Does the farmers' point of view on "rural efficiency" differ from that of other people? Give reasons for your answer.
- 7 It is often said that the farmer's social problems will automatically be solved when his economic problems are solved. Do you agree? Discuss fully.

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## CHAPTER II

### THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF AMERICAN RURAL LIFE

#### BRIEF SURVEY OF RURAL LIFE IN ITS VARIOUS STAGES

**All Peoples Formerly Rural.**—While the oft repeated statement that "farming became an occupation the day life on earth began" is not true, it is true that at one time all peoples and all society were rural, but between that day and this centuries have passed and a tremendous change has taken place

For many ages the human race carried on its whole life in the open spaces and forests. Some—and probably all—peoples lived in tribal groups and in many cases in what may be called villages, but there were no cities as we know them today. These peoples depended for the necessities of life directly upon the natural resources—the plants, animals and fish found in the areas over which they wandered or in which they settled temporarily

According to N. S. B. Gras, the four stages in the evolution of agricultural civilization are "collectional economy," "cultural nomadic economy," "settled village economy," and "town economy."<sup>1</sup> In addition to these four, he gives two other stages, "metropolitan economy," and "national economy," of which agriculture is of course a part, but not the predominating feature, as it is in the first four. Any adequate description of the different types of economy, so called, must cover not only the means by which people got their living, but also the type of life they lived and the forms of social organization which prevailed among them. A brief résumé of each of these stages will show the tremendous transition which has taken place in agriculture, and consequently in rural life, from the day when agriculture, if it may be so named, consisted of selecting and securing food supplies from nature's gifts—the stage of collective economy or

<sup>1</sup> Gras, N. S. B., *A History of Agriculture*, F. S. Crofts & Company, New York, 1925, chap. i.

direct appropriation—to the day when it is dominated by a price and market regime and the consideration of tariffs and international trade. Although all peoples were at one time in the stage of collective economy, all the farmers in our western civilization, and many in the eastern, are now living under metropolitan and national economy

**Cultural Stages of Agricultural Civilization.**—In the first stage, *collectional economy*, man was in a primitive state, directly dependent upon nature, since he was without domesticated plants or animals. In order to obtain food he was compelled to go where he could find roots and berries and wild animals and fish. This life has been described as one of "hunting and fishing," and, as Gras says, it "bore terrible immediacy" for those who lived it. It was not totally unorganized, kinship being the basic unit of organization, but it precluded the possibility of any permanent settlement and therefore lacked the amenities which accompany what we call civilization. At this stage all the people were open-country dwellers, living in groups in what may be called villages during the winter season and breaking up into small units during the hunting and fishing seasons. They had practically no tools except the bow and arrow, and no clothes except the skins of animals; they made crude attempts at household arrangement, but they had no need for money or other media of exchange and consequently no standardized set of economic values. They were creatures of nature even more than domestic animals are today.

However, the later stages of collectional economy saw some progress in the lives of these people, for a differentiation of labor, based on sex, arose, the men hunting and fighting and the women rearing the young, the men working with metals and leather and the women making crude textiles. Barter, the direct exchange of one commodity for another, likewise arose, first between individuals and later between clans, to continue, becoming more specialized but still employing no common medium of exchange, through the next stage of agricultural evolution.

When people found that plants and animals could be domesticated, they entered the stage of *cultural nomadic economy*. Whereas in the preceding stage the only way they could provide for the future was to store supplies of raw food, they now became husbandmen of plants and animals and could thus guarantee their food supply. As these new activities played a larger and larger

part, their life became less nomadic, and family and tribal life became more highly organized because of the necessity of caring for the herds and gardens. Even so, it should be remembered that to a great extent they were still nomads and hunters

The period of *settled village economy* followed after many ages, when breeding, cultivation and some degree of soil culture had been developed sufficiently to make it possible for clans and tribes to settle permanently in one geographic area. In this stage not only was the abode relatively more permanent, but the social organization became much more complex. It is generally accepted that each such settlement—or village—was composed of a kinship group or clan, as had been the case to some extent in the nomadic culture stage

Barter was still the only method of trade, but it had become organized with the establishment of definite places and definite times for carrying on trade—the village markets. However, the commodities themselves were still exchanged between individuals, a common medium of exchange being as yet unknown.

The exact date of the earliest settlements under this economy is not known, but it is believed that they were in existence in Egypt, Babylonia, and China several thousands of years before Christ.<sup>2</sup> The date of the earliest settlement of our Teutonic ancestors must have been much later, for Tacitus, writing of them as late as A D 97, says: "It is well known that none of the German nations inhabit cities or even admit of contiguous settlement. They dwell scattered and separate, as a spring, a meadow, or a grove may chance to invite them"<sup>3</sup> Some of the Indians found by the discoverers of America were living under a settled village economy, as are some Arab tribes even today.

*Town economy* arose when labor had become specialized as between the country and the more densely settled areas, and when trade, which had accordingly arisen between distant points, became sufficiently important to influence the location of settlements. Goods had to be shipped and transportation facilities had therefore to be developed. These were at first purely natural—rivers and streams and later rough trails—and settlements which had

<sup>2</sup> Gras, N S B, *op cit*, and Sorokin, P A, Zimmerman, C C, and Galpin, C. J., *A Systematic Source Book in Rural Sociology*, University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, 1930, part 1, chaps III, IV

<sup>3</sup> Tacitus, *Germania and Agricola*, Hinds, Noble and Eldridge, New York, p 22

been made in such favorable locations soon grew into towns. Thus the purely agricultural settlements became differentiated from the towns, and there developed a mutual dependence of these two relatively independent groups, whereas in the settled village economy the village resident was not even relatively independent of the farmer, for he was himself the farmer.

Certain of these towns became cities, adding industry to their hitherto purely commercial functions; and in addition to acting as middle man, so to speak, in handling the farmer's produce, they assumed the refining and manufacturing of agricultural and other produce. *Metropolitan economy* arose when certain cities became powerful enough to dominate whole sections, overshadowing the smaller nearby towns and cities, and through their market transactions influencing large areas. In the early days of this stage most of the great metropolises were seaports, like New York City and Liverpool, but later great inland cities—such as Chicago, Denver, Omaha, Detroit, St. Louis and Dallas in the United States—located on rivers or lakes and with vast agricultural hinterlands, grew to be metropolises.

The following have been mentioned as some of the changes which have come in with metropolitan economy:

The artisan trader or petty merchant of town economy saw himself subordinated to the man of big business . . .

Towns remained to perform commercial, industrial and cultural services for the country round them, but town economy disappeared . . .

In the town stage, storage had been in the hands of artisans, retailers and wholesalers in the town itself and of cultivators in the country. In the metropolitan period there arose specialized warehousemen who stored not only for their own account but for others at so much per bushel, barrel, or hundred-weight . . .

Common carriers arose to do the work formerly performed by farmer or by trader. . . .

It has brought him [the farmer] into competitive relations with farmers in his own nation and in many other parts of the world. . .

When village economy had given way to town economy, the cultivator of the soil was forced to turn his eyes away from his abode to a near-by town where he bought his supplies, sold his surplus, and received news and ideas. Then metropolitan economy established an even greater and generally more distant center. The farmer was now even more remote from the vital point of material and cultural



affairs His subordination to the mechanism, which he could hardly know much about, was greater than ever. <sup>4</sup>

Gras' classification gives an acceptable brief survey of rural-urban evolution and development, and indicates the differentiation between them. However, the city and the rural sections have seldom been completely separated, and they are even less so in this country today. From the early nomadic culture to the modern metropolitan economy the urban population throughout the world has tended to increase at the expense of the rural, and with this shift in population has come a change in rural organization and culture.

### RURAL LIFE IN ANCIENT TIMES

It is quite impossible, and of course unnecessary for our purposes, to give a complete picture of the life of the earliest peoples of the human race, furthermore, what is known has been gathered from sources which tell practically nothing of their agriculture, much less of their rural life. The artifacts of the Old and New Stone Ages and the early Metal Ages are chiefly war and hunting implements. The few facts which are known regarding the primitive agriculturists lead to the belief that for many ages actual cultivation was carried on with wooden implements which naturally perished with time. Although some traces of a crude art have been found, the institutions and customs of the people themselves can of course be known only when there has developed some lasting form of painting or writing by means of which traditions can be transmitted from one generation to another. In addition to the scarcity of the material available regarding these early peoples is the fact that it is only recently that historians have sought to add to their chronicles of dynasties and wars the stories of the day-by-day life of the rulers and the makers of wars, they have been much less concerned with—and able to find out about—the life of the masses who were not of a high enough rank to be either rulers or leaders of wars.

The roughly chronological classification of rural peoples given by Hobhouse, Wheeler and Ginsberg serves as a suggestive index to the long and varied history of rural life. "(1) Lowest Hunters, (2) Higher Hunters, (3) Lowest Agricultural, (4) Lowest Pas-

<sup>4</sup> Gras, N. S. B., *op cit*, chap. vi.

toral, (5) Higher Agricultural, (6) Higher Pastoral, (7) Still Higher Agricultural"<sup>5</sup>

We shall for two reasons limit our survey to the rural life of only such peoples as may be said to be antecedents of western civilization, first, because it is through this line of cultural evolution that our own civilization has come, and, second, because it is regarding these peoples that the most exact and detailed information is available. Breasted says.

No dated piece of metal found in China can be placed earlier than about 1200 B C, that is, some 3000 years later than in Egypt. As for writing, there is no surviving document written in Chinese which can be dated earlier than about the fifteenth century B C, or some 2500 years later than in Egypt. No Sinologist of reputation now believes that Chinese civilization developed earlier than that of Western Asia and Egypt. Moreover, valuable and instructive as Chinese civilization undoubtedly was and still is, it was geographically so remote that, as we have already indicated, it had no direct connection with the main stream of civilized development of which we of the west are a part. The same is true of India, whose culture is later than that of China. On the other hand, both cultures received great impetus from the west. .<sup>6</sup>

**The Egyptians.**—Something of the story of Egypt is known as far back as the Early Stone Age, for even before the Metal Ages the farmers of the Nile Valley were raising wheat and barley, and as early as 4000 B C they were watering their grain and flax fields by means of irrigation. Of almost equal status with Re, the sun god, was Osiris, god of the Nile and of agricultural fertility.<sup>7</sup>

The social organization in Egypt in the Pyramid Age was apparently one of estate and village economy, and the picture-writing which has been found in the ancient tombs gives a fairly complete picture of a great estate. In describing one of these ancient paintings, Breasted says: "These people in the gayly painted picture of the market place on the chapel wall were the common folk of Egypt in the Pyramid Age. Some of them were free men, following their own business or industry. Others were slaves, work-

<sup>5</sup>Hobhouse, L., Wheeler, G., and Ginsberg, M., *The Material Culture and Social Institutions of Simpler Peoples*, Chapman and Hall, London, 1915.

<sup>6</sup>Breasted, J. H., *The Conquest of Civilization*, Harper & Brothers, New York, 1926, p. 114. See also Sorokin, Zimmerman, and Galpin, *op cit*, chap. i.

<sup>7</sup>Breasted, J. H., *op cit*, p. 59.

ing the fields on the great estates. Neither of these humble classes owned any land. Over them were the landowners, the Pharaoh and his great lords and officials . . .”<sup>8</sup>

The estate was an almost completely self-sustaining economic and social unit; it was the market place as well as the place where raw materials were produced and to some extent refined. At its head was a lord or nobleman, and there were craftsmen of all kinds—smiths, potters, glass makers, weavers, cabinet makers, and tillers of the soil. Each village was ruled by a local chieftain from whom the peasants obtained their irrigation rights and to whom they paid taxes in the form of farm and other products. This form of organization seems to have persisted, for the organization found among these people in the feudal age of Egypt, which had become well established by 2000 B C, was apparently very similar to that of the great estates.

The next period was that of the famous Hyksos or Shepherd Kings. The civilization which these invaders of unknown origin brought with them was apparently pastoral, but it mingled with that already present and became an agricultural and industrial civilization just as that of the Pyramid Age before it had been. The Shepherd Kings brought with them a domesticated animal, the horse, and probably expanded animal husbandry and the occupations which go with it.

Herodotus claimed that there were as many as 20,000 populous cities in Egypt during the reign of Amasis, about 1500 B C.<sup>9</sup> Wilkinson quotes Herodotus, Diodorus, Strabo and Plato on the social classes of the period of later Egyptian civilization,<sup>10</sup> and Plato divided society into the following six classes, or castes, each apparently differing sharply in social status: priests, artificers, shepherds, huntsmen, husbandmen, and soldiers, but there is little known of the actual life of these different classes. According to Wilkinson, “Though the lower classes of the people appear to have been contented with their condition, there is no evidence of their having participated in the affluence enjoyed by the higher orders . . . The degrading custom of bowing before those in authority argues that they were subject to severe discipline and

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 75.

<sup>9</sup> Wilkinson, Sir Gardner, *Manners and Customs of the Ancient Egyptians*, John Murray, London, 1836, p. 217.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 236-239.

punishment, though doubtless only administered according to rules of justice." Herodotus is his authority for the fact that the shepherds, whose daughters were not permitted to marry outside of their own class, were the lowest class, while the swineherds, who were considered impure, could not enter the temple<sup>11</sup>

**The Babylonians, Assyrians, Chaldeans, Persians and Hebrews.**—Although all of this group was undoubtedly at one time purely nomadic, eventually they became settled agricultural peoples. The Babylonians developed irrigation and small-grain farming in the Tigris and Euphrates Valleys. Much light has been thrown upon the social organization of this people by the laws of Hammurapi (2067-2025 B C), for from them can be deduced the fact that there existed in Babylonia something approaching a feudal system, with overseers, tax gatherers, and classes similar to those in any oligarchic society. However, Hammurapi, although of desert origin, was fundamentally a merchant prince, and as such he was typical of the upper class of the Babylonian Empire, most of whom were merchants rather than farmers

Agriculture was far more dominant in Assyria, trade and industry playing such a minor rôle that during the period of Assyrian ascendancy under Sargon II and Sennacherib, foreign skill had to be depended on for their industries and art. However, practically nothing is known of the life and social organization of the country population of this predominantly rural and rich agricultural area, and even less is known of that of Chaldea.

Persia's national history began with nomadic shepherds, but her people, different from the others thus far discussed, came not from Arabia and the south but from the grasslands of the north—they were the Indo-Europeans, from whom sprang a large portion of our later European peoples. Although they were primarily shepherds, they became agriculturalists, due in no small way to the use of the horse which they had already domesticated. They had no art or literature, and at this stage would without doubt be classed in Hobhouse, Wheeler and Ginsberg's third class of rural peoples, the "lowest agricultural." Although little is known of the life of those who actually tilled the soil, the family group was the highest social unit, although the fact that they were all followers of Zoroaster served to give some degree of unity to the people as a whole. Under Darius (521-485 B.C.) the small

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid*, p. 239.

landholder practically disappeared, all the lands being divided among powerful noblemen who ruled as feudal lords under the king.<sup>12</sup>

There is a great deal of information regarding the Hebrews in the Old Testament alone, this has been increased because of the fact that western historians have had a peculiar interest in discovering everything possible about these particular people. Although the Hebrews were at one time nomadic, it is as semi-nomadic shepherds and, later, as settled agriculturists, that we best know them.<sup>13</sup> Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Saul and David, according to the Old Testament, were shepherds who lived approximately sometime during the period from 1400 to 1000 B.C., and even as late as about 750 B.C., Elijah and Amos were tending flocks. David's son Solomon was a trader, and Isaiah, who lived about 700 B.C., was a city prince.

During the nomadic and semi-nomadic periods of Hebrew history, and remaining for many generations following, the clan was the unit of social organization, each household largely constituting a patriarchal society of its own. There were three classes of rural Hebrew people; at the head of each household was the baal, or patriarch, the oldest male. He was set apart from the other members of his household; he might, and often did, have more than one wife, but neither wife nor children were in any sense his equal. He was the landed proprietor and one of the Elders. The second class comprised the wives and children; they were the common people, the tillers of the soil, tenders of the wine press, and the shepherds. The slaves constituted the third class, although they were often in a sense members of the household holding responsible positions.<sup>14</sup> It was possible in some cases for a slave to become economically independent, and he was entitled by law to purchase his freedom.<sup>15</sup>

After the Hebrews entered Canaan and became a settled pastoral and agricultural people, there arose the institution of private property, chiefly in lands and slaves, which became widespread; and pastoral villages grew up, from which these people went forth

<sup>12</sup> Braasted, *op cit.*, p. 201.

<sup>13</sup> See particularly the books of Genesis, Exodus, Numbers, Joshua, and Judges.

<sup>14</sup> See Genesis xiv 14 and 15, and xxiv: 2

<sup>15</sup> Leviticus xxv 49

to work in the fields by day and to which they returned at night<sup>16</sup> During the whole period of Hebrew national existence there never developed a class which was either purely merchant or purely laboring, the former function was carried on by the clan leaders themselves, and labor was secured from members of the household and from slaves. As Wallis says, "From first to last, society was conceived only as a brotherhood group,"<sup>17</sup> and he might have added that, although we know comparatively little of the actual life of the Hebrew community, we do know that it was as thoroughly dominated by agriculture and ideals of rural life as any the world has known.

**Rural Life in Greece.**—Very little is known of the rural life or agriculture of ancient Greece, for the literature of the period gives little direct information. The Roman historian, Varro, stated that it was necessary for him to study from forty to fifty Greek writers in preparing his work. The Homeric poems indicate that in the strictest sense the Achæans were pastoral rather than agricultural, although some cultivation of plants seems to have been practiced Nevertheless, enough is known to make it possible to name what may be called the different stages of rural life in Greek history. The first was the period of the *nomads*, an Indo-European group of tribesmen who came down the Danube Basin, driving their flocks before them and bringing with them their horse-driven carts, and who, between 2000 and 1000 B C, practically displaced or absorbed the Ægean peoples who were already there. These nomads were organized on a tribal basis, but below the tribes were more intimate family groups, "brotherhoods"<sup>18</sup> Their governmental organization was simple, and their social organization almost completely democratic, the only ones who held anything approaching a superior status being the Elders, who formed a "council" in periods of crisis.

Between 1000 and 600 B C., these Greek shepherds gradually began to cultivate the land Settling in tribal groups as they naturally did, each such settlement formed the nucleus of an *agricultural village* The land surrounding each village remained for a time in tribal ownership, each family drawing lots for the portion

<sup>16</sup> See Songs of Solomon, vii 11, and I Samuel xi 4, 5

<sup>17</sup> Wallis, L., *Sociological Study of the Bible*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1912, chap. vii.

<sup>18</sup> Breasted, J H., *op cit*, pp 276-277.

which it would cultivate. Individual family ownership gradually prevailed, some families accordingly achieved a superior status, and petty kings began to arise. This combination of agricultural villages and established kings was the foundation of the Greek *city-state*. But the splendor and magnificence which are usually associated with kings are lacking in these Greek kings; according to Breasted, "For a long time even the dwellings of the Greek kings were usually but simple farm houses of sun-dried brick, where the swine wandered unhindered into the court or slumbered in the sunshine beside the royal doorway."<sup>19</sup> However, these kings gradually adopted a mode of dress and type of life which were an index to the fact that trade and commerce had become dominant in at least the large city-states. The kings grew more powerful, and rich nobles arose who little by little became stronger than the kings themselves. Peasants became burdened with debts and sold themselves into slavery, or moved away from the land to find work in the growing cities. Corruption and the theft of land became almost as common as the piracy of merchants, and many an unfortunate landowner fled the country or was sold into foreign slavery. Even as late as Solon's reforms (549 B.C.), there were four classes in the population, the nobles being at the top and the peasants holding the lowest rank.

Although a citizen of the Greek city-state was supposedly a landowner, the actual tilling of the soil was probably done directly by the slaves. After quoting Herodotus as saying that the Greeks "hold the citizens who practiced trades and their children in less repute than the rest, while they esteem as noble those who keep aloof from handicrafts, and especially honor such as are given wholly to war," Grant goes on to say that "there was, of course, agriculture, the first, greatest and among the Greeks the most honorable of industry." He adds, however, that "a thoroughly self-respecting man could not harden his hands with the plow or the potter's wheel."<sup>20</sup>

In his book, *A Day in Old Athens*, Davis paints an entrancing picture of country life around Athens, depicting a sort of plantation or country estate which is probably typical of that time.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 281.

<sup>20</sup> Grant, A. J., *Greece in the Age of Pericles*, Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, 1893, p. 9

The owner is a wealthy man, and has an extensive establishment; the farm buildings—once white-washed, but now for the most part somewhat dirty—wander away over a large area. There are wide courts, deep in manure, surrounded by barns; there are sties, hay-mows, carefully closed granaries, an olive press, a grain mill, all kinds of stables and folds, likewise a huge irregularly shaped house wherein are lodged the numerous slaves and hired help. The general design of this house is the same as of a city house—the rooms opening upon an inner court, but naturally its dimensions are ampler with the ampler land space.<sup>21</sup>

Some estates were even more elaborate than the one just described, they were the shrines of gods and goddesses, and some of them supported castles. Xenophon has described his own estate as follows: "This piece of ground lies on the road from Lacedæmon to Olympia, about twenty stadia from the temple of Jupiter at Olympia. There are within the place groves and hills covered with trees, adapted for the breeding of swine, goats, and horses, so that the beasts of the persons coming to the festival are amply supplied with food. Round the temple itself is planted a grove of cultivated trees, whatever fruits are eatable in the different seasons."<sup>22</sup>

However, there is little actual information concerning the rural life of the average Greek to be gotten from the above descriptions of Athenian country estates, for although Euripides, Aristophanes and even Plato speak highly of the occupation of agriculture, it is commerce, war, philosophy, art and athletics for which the Greeks are chiefly praised. Although, according to Grant, "Nowhere in Greece was the great industry of agriculture thought unworthy of a freeman," it was left to the slaves, who comprised from one-half to three-quarters of the total population of the Greek city-states. One class of Greek slaves was composed of formerly free farmers who voluntarily submitted themselves to slavery because of debt, and Solon's act in forgiving land debts would indicate that the small-farmer class was at that time practically crushed under mortgages issued because of non-payment of taxes. The Greek slave enjoyed a higher status and better treatment than the Roman; such classes as the Helots of Sparta were serfs who, if Plutarch can be believed, were very badly

<sup>21</sup> Davis, W. S., *A Day in Old Athens*, Allyn and Bacon, New York, 1914, p. 197.

<sup>22</sup> Xenophon, *Anabasis*, book v, chap. iii.



treated. It can be safely said, however, that the rural population, consisting as it did primarily of slaves, did not participate in the culture which made Periclean Greece the envy of all time. Thus this civilization, pastoral and democratic at its beginning, became industrial and oligarchic, following the tenets prescribed by the latter until, about 2000 B C, a "larger world engulfed the old Greek city-states."

**Rural Life in Ancient Rome.**—In contrast with the peoples discussed previously, a great deal is known of rural life in Rome, for not only is Rome's general history known, but the works of Varro, Cato, and other Roman writers have been preserved, and, furthermore, there is much detailed information about early Roman agriculture. Moreover, there was extensive legislation concerning lands, and some laws dealing with the various agricultural classes.

The vast majority of the people of ancient Italy lived on farms, and the chief investments of the wealthy class were in land. Both the patricians and the plebeians were landed people, the patricians' estates running into hundreds of acres, and the plebeians' holdings constituting only small plots from one to four acres in extent—little more than gardens. Although the government owned a large portion of the land, the various sections were undoubtedly at one time claimed by the tribes which inhabited them, and it is probable that the plebeians held their lands from these old tribal days.

Gras divides Roman agriculture into the following five periods. (1) "the small cultivator," (2) "the slave plantations," (3) "the estate with free tenants," (4) "the estate with servile tenants," and (5) "the development of the manor."<sup>28</sup> A brief survey of these periods will provide a glimpse of the rural life of Rome at the various stages in its history.

The first period, that of *the small cultivator*, persisted to a greater or less degree from about 500 to 200 B C, and rural life during that time was probably very much like any other pioneer agricultural life. The cultivators lived in scattered dwellings, and were compelled by the government to give much of their time to service in the army. When they were not thus engaged in military service, their time was divided between crude farming, hunting and fishing.

The origin of *the slave plantation*, which developed sometime

<sup>28</sup> Gras, N S B, *op. cit.*, chap. III.

after 200 B.C., was probably twofold first, in the large grants of land made by the government to senators and noblemen, and, second, in the absorption by the wealthy of small holdings which were taken over to satisfy debts contracted for the most part while the small landholders were in military service<sup>24</sup> The plantations were sometimes thousands of acres in size, and on them developed the greatest slave system the world has ever known. The slaves were foreigners and, although they may have been highly intelligent Greeks or Gauls, they were outcasts in Roman society. Thousands of them worked on the plantations in gangs.

It was during the period of the slave plantation that Pliny, the two Catos, and Varro lived and wrote, and from their writings we learn something of the system of farm organization and management, and a little about the character of rural society and the classes which composed it. From these same sources we learn also that many small holdings still existed during this period, for Cato made plans for 66-acre and 144-acre farms, and Varro recommended 120 acres as the acceptable size for an olive farm.

In Cato's books is found advice given by him to the farmers of rather small estates, and the following are his statements of the duties of *owners, overseers, housekeepers* and *hands*. From "the duties" we can infer not only the classes into which the people on a small estate were divided, but also the social status of each class.

These are the duties of the overseer. He should maintain discipline. He should settle all the quarrels among the hands, if any one is at fault he should administer the punishment. He should see that the hands keep busy and should see that they do what the master has ordered. He should confine his religious practices to church on Sunday, or to his own house. He should lend money to no man unbidden by the master, but what the master has lent he should collect. First up in the morning, he should be the last to go to bed; and before he does, he should see that the farm gates are closed and that each hand is in his own bed and that the stock have been fed. Remember that while work may stop, expenses still go on<sup>25</sup>

The housekeeper was subject to the overseer, and might be given to him as wife by the owner. Among her duties were the

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>25</sup> *Roman Farm Management—The Treatises of Cato and Varro*, by a Virginia Farmer, The Macmillan Company, New York, 1918, pp. 32-35, quoted from Cato, D. E., *Agriculture*, chap. v.

following: "[That] she be not given to wasteful habits; that she does not gossip with the neighbors and other women. She should not receive visitors either in the kitchen or in her own quarters. She should not go out to parties, nor should she gad about. She should not practice religious observances, nor should she ask others to do so for her without permission of the master. Remember that the master practices religion for the entire household."<sup>26</sup>

There is no detailed description of the life of the slaves extant; but in a section entitled "Of the Hands," Cato gives directions for the provisions for the slaves, among others:

The following are customary allowances for food. For the hands, four pecks of meal for the winter, and four and one-half for the summer. For the overseer, the housekeeper, the wagoner, the shepherd, three pecks each. For the slaves, four pounds of bread for the winter, but when they begin to cultivate the vines this is to increase to five pounds until the figs are ripe, then return to four pounds.

Save the wind-fall olives as much as possible as relishes for the hands. Later set aside such of the ripe olives as will make the least oil. When the olives are all eaten, give them fish, pickles and vinegar. One peck of salt per annum is enough for each hand.

Allow each hand a smock and a cloak every other year. As often as you give out a smock or cloak to anyone take up the old one, so that caps can be made out of it. A pair of heavy wooden shoes should be allowed every other year.<sup>27</sup>

It should be remembered that Cato was not describing conditions as they existed on large estates, much less those on slave plantations. Varro goes into greater detail about the status and life of the slaves, and it is apparent from his writings that they were treated very much like livestock.<sup>28</sup> The numerous slave revolts, such as the one led by Spartacus, the Thracian slave, also lead to the belief that the life of these plantation slaves, captured in wars with other countries, generally branded, often working chained together, and sometimes forced to remain in the open with the livestock without food and shelter being provided for them, was little, if any, better than that of the galley slaves.<sup>29</sup>

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, quoted from Cato.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, quoted from Cato, chaps. lvi, lviii, lix.

<sup>28</sup> Varro, M. T., *On Farming*, book i, chaps. xvii, xviii; book ii, chap. x, translated by Lloyd Storr-Best, G. Bell and Sons, Ltd., London, 1912.

<sup>29</sup> Gras, N. S. B., *op. cit.*, pp. 57-58.

During the entire slave plantation period, which continued to about A.D. 1, the life of the Roman rural people undoubtedly constituted a system of culture or society to a smaller extent than at almost any other time or in the case of any other similar number of agricultural workers in any other country.

The next period, that of *the estate with free tenants*, which began about the time of the birth of Christ and lasted for about two centuries, saw the development of a quite different rural society in Rome. It is true that many of the old slave plantations were still in existence, and there were still many small cultivators, but the characteristic type of farm organization was that of the large estate farmed by free tenants. The slave system had gradually given way, due both to the decrease in the wars which were their source of supply, to the increasing cost of investments in slaves, and to the change in the system of farming.<sup>80</sup>

It was during this period that Rome developed her commerce to its highest point, and enjoyed her greatest wealth. The owners of the rural mansions and villas would correspond to the "country gentlemen" of today, and their homes were apparently far more palatial than those of the slave plantation owners had been. Some of the estates were operated very much like plantations, but on others the tenants paid a certain sum as rent, being free in both person and tenure. The farming on still other of these estates was apparently operated by contractors from the cities who employed slave gangs for the actual work. Many of the tenant families lived on the same estate for many generations, and, although it is probable that the rural life of this period did not differ greatly from that of the preceding period and the one which followed this, little is known of the actual nature of rural society beyond the facts presented here.

By about A.D. 200, the estates had once again grown into huge holdings, and the tenants were again losing their freedom, becoming serfs who were bound to the soil they cultivated, instead of slaves as in the past. This is the period which Gras calls *the estate with servile tenants*. The free tenants, seeking the protection of these powerful landowners, apparently traded their freedom for this protection, those who were still slaves were given a degree of freedom in order that they and the former free tenants might work together in large numbers on the estates as a homo-

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 62-63

geneous group. The governors, the military leaders, and the Church supported this new order of events, and under Constantine the institution of serfdom was written into law.

Gras inclines to the opinion that this period of Roman agricultural development was due chiefly to the decline of town and village economy, which could not resist the decline in trade and the encroachment of the Barbarians. Consequently, the people sought economic security through agriculture, and, to provide this security, rural society was organized on the basis of self-sufficient population and agricultural units.

The fifth and final stage of Roman agricultural development was *the development of the manor*. As we shall see later in the discussion of the European manor, the manor was the most self-sufficient unit of rural society the world has ever known. Under the manorial system the serfs were still permitted to farm their own small plots, but they were also compelled to give a certain amount of their time to cultivating the landlord's own farm from which his household establishment was maintained.

Although, as has been seen, much is known regarding Roman agriculture, the information on the everyday life of the rural individual and community is meager, and we must therefore draw largely on our imagination and our powers of deduction to secure much of a picture of it. Tradition has it that the failure of agriculture is chiefly responsible for the fall of the Roman Empire, but Gras, whom we have quoted so freely in this chapter, does not agree with this. He inclines rather to the belief that the reverse is true—that the fall of the Empire was responsible for the failure of Roman agriculture. This discussion of Roman rural life can be concluded in no better way than by quoting him once again.

The first of our five periods is the iron age of Rome. That city conquers Italy and begins to try its strength on other peoples. This is the period of the soldier-cultivators of the small general farms. The second period is the golden age of Rome, when Rome becomes mistress of the Mediterranean world and reaches her greatest cultural heights. At the same time the slave plantation, fed by war, provided its owner with luxury and ease. The third period is the silver age of Rome, when that city reached maturity and put a limit to its ambitions for conquest. In agriculture, the slave plantation owners also drew back, contenting themselves with rents from free

men rather than profits from the labor of men driven to work under the lash. The fourth period is one of imperial decline, of division of empire, and local political security or feudalism. In the country districts, too, we find the rent takers seeking economic security rather than large incomes. And finally in the fifth period the empire goes to pieces in the west, dissolves into its integral parts, commercial agriculture gives way to a relatively self-sufficing manorial system. As long as the prevailing unit was town economy, the government could secure resources for both civil and military affairs, because within the towns was mobilized the personal property of the empire. With this at its disposal, the government could pay officials to administer provinces, hold courts, collect taxes. With this it could pay soldiers and provide food and clothing for them. But with the town going or gone, the task was difficult or impossible. When towns decayed the empire declined. And with them agriculture descended to its lowest depths. Or, perhaps we may say, the wheel had come full circle: the empire went back to the dust from which it had sprung and agriculture went back to a dependent village organization, something like that which prevailed in the days of Roman beginnings, when patricians lorded it over small plebeian cultivators.<sup>81</sup>

### QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

- 1 What contribution does this chapter make to your thinking about rural life?
- 2 In what parts of the world are rural people still in some of the early stages of agriculture?
- 3 Name at least one people of today who are in each of the five cultural stages of agricultural civilization.
- 4 Do you think that a "metropolitan economy" will eventually prevail in every section of the United States?
- 5 What ancient nation or people have you thought of as most rural?
- 6 Are there any indications that American rural civilization may suffer setbacks such as was the case with the rural life of the ancient nations discussed in this chapter?
- 7 How do you account for the fact that so little is known about the social life and community organizations of ancient peoples whose national history is fairly well recorded?

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## CHAPTER III

### THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF AMERICAN RURAL LIFE (*Continued*)

#### THE RURAL LIFE OF MEDIEVAL EUROPE

It is impossible, in this brief account, to discuss every stage of the rural life of medieval Europe. Consequently, since only generalizations are possible, we shall indicate the general character of the rural life of this period, and confine the rest of the discussion to the outstanding forms of rural social organization in England.

**Continental Rural Life of the Middle Ages.**—From the time of the earliest knowledge of European peoples up to the dominance of the feudal system, the evolution of rural civilization followed rather closely the first three steps given by Gras and discussed in the preceding chapter. The following quotation is from Kropotkin's description of this evolution:

The Teutons, the Celts, the Scandinavians, the Slavarians, and others, when they first came in contact with the Romans, were in a transitional state of social organization. The clan unions, based upon real or supposed common origin, had kept them together for many thousands of years in succession . . . However, for causes already mentioned, the separate patriarchal family had slowly but steadily developed within the clans, and in the long run it evidently meant the individual accumulation of wealth and power, and the hereditary transmission of both. The frequent migration of the Barbarians and the ensuing wars only hastened the division of the gens into separate families, while dispersing of stems and their mingling with strangers offered singular facilities for the ultimate disintegration of those unions based upon kinship.

Many stems had no force to resist disintegration; they broke up and were lost for history. But the more vigorous ones did not disintegrate. They came out of the ordeal with a new organization—the village community—which kept them together for the next fifteen centuries or more.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Kropotkin, P., *Mutual Aid*, Alfred A. Knopf, New York, 1922, pp. 94-95.



Previous to the sixteenth century, what is now England, Scotland, Ireland, Norway, Sweden, Denmark, Germany, what was formerly Austria-Hungary, and all the Slav countries of Europe had been predominantly rural. The people of the land, cultivators as well as landlords, had at first wielded considerable power in national affairs, but the landlords had gradually become dominant, large estates had developed, and the feudal system had come into existence.<sup>2</sup> Since the transition from collective to town economy was undoubtedly similar to that of the Egyptians and the other peoples described in the preceding chapter, we shall give no further space to the life of rural Europe during this period, but rather turn to a brief discussion of rural life in England—the free village and the European manor, the two predominant forms of rural social organization during the Middle Ages.

#### RURAL LIFE IN ENGLAND TO THE INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION

**Early and Premanorial Rural Life.**—Vinogradoff, together with Maitland and others, has traced the development of rural society in what is now England from Cæsar's expedition in 55 B C to the origin of the manor—through the earlier stages of hunting, fishing and herding, to a hamlet or village economy. Kinship was at first the basis of organization, the tribe or clan being the unit. The land was apparently owned by these tribal groups rather than by individuals, and apportioned by the group according to definite rules to households within it. In the Welch Gwely, for example, all the fathers of the various households were equal shareholders, and in other sections all adult males were considered equal shareholders.<sup>3</sup> It is not definitely known whether this communal type of organization prevailed throughout England, but it had disappeared in many places even before Cæsar's invasion. Under his regime, the heads of patriarchal groups were kings, and early Salic laws indicate clearly that many degrees of social status existed. Vinogradoff makes it clear that when the Norman invaders entered England in 1066 they found a rather thoroughly stratified society, and that William of Normandy over-

<sup>2</sup> Irvine, H. D., *The Making of Rural Europe*, E. P. Dutton & Company, Inc., New York, 1923, chap. 1.

<sup>3</sup> Vinogradoff, P., *The Growth of the Manor*, The Macmillan Company, New York, 1911, pp. 20-22.

laid the existing village or hamlet type of rural organization with a feudal manorial system.<sup>4</sup>

Regardless of whether we follow Vinogradoff or Maitland, we arrive at the same conclusion—that within the population of the so-called free village there were at least two classes, the free tribesmen and the dependents, and often a third minor class, the strangers.<sup>5</sup> Vinogradoff is our authority in this brief description of these classes and their subdivisions.

At the head of the first group, the free tribesmen, were the *chieftain* and the *lord*, the chieftain undoubtedly being a survival of the tribal patriarch of the old pastoral days. Although in Wales he had little power beyond that of determining on the eligibility to tribal relationships, in Ireland and Scotland he had greater power, becoming almost a dictator in times of war. Where there were both chieftain and lord in a village, the lord was the economic and political leader, conducting the court, collecting rent, and being responsible to the king as well as—or rather than—to his tribesmen. There is no evidence that the chieftain was an aristocrat, so far as dwelling or social privilege was concerned, but the status of the lord increased under the Roman regime and became even higher under the Normans.

Below the chieftain and the lord were the *commoners* or *burgesses*, each individual a member of a specific kinship group. They were the tribal warriors and tax officials and, in the more democratic communities, were eligible to the local village political offices. They owned property in common with all the other tribesmen, and if private ownership prevailed, they inherited equally with their blood relations. The free tribesmen who were heads of households held the more desirable military positions, the other men being graded according to age and tribal status.

The *villens* and the *slaves* constituted the dependents. The *villens* (*taeogs*) were probably natives who had been forced into a degree of subjection by their conquerors. They were serfs, bound to the land, and required to pay rent and taxes, to perform specified duties, and to follow certain customs in their daily life. They lived apart in communities of their own, generally under stew-

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, book ii.

<sup>5</sup> See Maitland, F. W., *Domesday and Beyond*, Little, Brown & Company, Boston, 1897; Seebohm, F., *The English Village Community*, Longmans, Green & Company, New York, 1890.

ards. However, they were permitted to hold property, and under favorable circumstances they might attain the status of freemen.

The status of the slaves (*caeths*) was the lowest in every respect. They could be bought and sold (in Ireland a female slave was a unit in computing values in trading), and little importance was attached to whether they lived or died, there was no penalty exacted if a king killed a slave not his own.

The *strangers* (*alltuds*), who constituted the third class, were outcasts, although they enjoyed some degree of freedom. They were people who had drifted into a tribe from far-off places, or had been expelled from their own tribe or had lost their tribal status through some other misfortune. Their freedom was not complete, since the only protection they could secure was usually bought by surrendering themselves to some degree of subjection by a chieftain or a lord, but circumstances often made it easy for them to become a member of the tribe, thereby attaining the full status of freemen.

The following quotation from Vinogradoff provides an excellent conclusion to this section:

If we now consider Celtic society from the point of view of its relation to the coming manorial system, we shall notice, without difficulty, that it contained some of the elements which went towards the formation of the manor, but that these elements were in an incomplete and disconnected state, and overshadowed by the influence of other principles. Landownership began to be recognized as a force, but there was as yet no regular organization of the estate in which dependent labor would be gathered round an economic center; many serfs lived by the side of free proprietors and free tenants; but they formed separate communities, and were not arranged to bear the burden of work for the benefit of the free people. Both serfs and freemen were subjected to food tribute, and providing maintenance for the chiefs and kings; but otherwise their position was that of independent householders. There were many aristocratic ranks and degrees in the folk, but the passage from one to the other was easy, and the differences of pedigree, wealth and influence which led to their formation were constantly shifting, so that there could be no question of a settled system of hierarchical privilege and patronage. The segregation of political power, as distinct from tribal authority, had begun, and had produced some attempts to arrange society into rough, symmetrical compartments; but for the chief purposes of defence and of economic organization the tribal grouping still remained

the principal scheme of society. The ideas underlying tribal order, affinity in blood and association through origin from one and the same household, contributed powerfully towards keeping up a spirit of cooperation and safeguarding the interests of every born tribesman as member of a kindred.<sup>6</sup>

**The Manorial System.**—Since the elaborate scheme of the social organization and life of the manor is undoubtedly familiar, only a few of its outstanding characteristics will be presented here.

Under the manorial system, which had its rise in England between 800 and 1200, the land constituting a manor was granted to a lord by the king, and while it actually remained under the crown's ownership, the lord for all practical purposes could regard it as if it were his own. The lord might be either secular—a knight, baron, earl, or the king himself; or ecclesiastical—a bishop, archbishop, or a group of monks.<sup>7</sup> The lord's house was often a castle surrounded by a courtyard and fortified, nearby were the central storehouses, the church, and the offices and homes of his chief officers, the bailiff (business manager), and the reeve (foreman), and of various messengers, shepherds and artisans.

One part of the manor was set aside as the lord's own farm (the *demesne*), and the rest was given over to tenant farms. The lord's farm might cover from forty or fifty acres to several thousand, depending on the size of the manor, and the tenants were compelled to give a certain portion of their time to cultivating the *demesne* under the direction of the lord's officers. Thus the lord obtained the commodities needed for his own existence and for the payment of his crown taxes.

The population of the manor, exclusive of the lord's family and his officers and retainers, was divided into a number of classes, each one sharply differentiated as far as social status was concerned.<sup>8</sup> The *freemen* constituted the highest class. They were tenants who paid rents and served the lord in wars and in harvest time, but their service was always based upon a specified contract. They were free to leave the manor at will; their sons could learn a trade or enter the church, and they could marry their daughters to whomever they wished.

<sup>6</sup> Vinogradoff, P., *op. cit.*, book 1, chap. i, pp. 35-36.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, book III, chap. II.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, book III, chap. III.

The most numerous class was the second, the *customary tenants, serfs or villeins*, who, while not exactly slaves, did not enjoy complete freedom. They were required to serve the lord of the manor a specified number of days each week. They could not leave the manor, their sons could not learn a trade or enter the church without special permission usually obtained—if at all—on payment of a fee or fine; and they were restricted in choosing husbands for their daughters, since marriage with a man from another manor or with a freeman from their own manor was prohibited.

The third and fourth classes were the *cotters* or *squatters*, and the *slaves*, respectively. The cotters occupied a few acres which were assigned to them, perhaps because of the fact that they had previously possessed them; but their holding was too small to support their families and consequently they were compelled to find additional employment wherever they could.

The slaves were few in number; they held no land, were compelled to work for the lord, and could be sold like livestock. Usually, however, they eventually attained the status of cotters or villeins.

The manor as a whole was a complete rural community on the one hand, and, on the other, a division of the feudal state. It had its village markets and fairs, its churches and courts, and even a system of organized recreation. Economically it was a unit of agricultural production, politically it was both a tax-collecting and a military unit, and socially it was, as Gras says, "a group of persons who not only worked and prayed but visited and made merry together." All in all, it was probably the most self-sufficient agricultural community the world has ever known. But the manorial system is not characteristic only of the Middle Ages, for although it was superseded in England about 1500, it persisted in Russia until 1861, when it was abolished by imperial decree, and it disappeared in Japan, its last stronghold, only a decade later.

**The Downfall of the Manorial System and the Disappearance of Serfdom.**—During the manorial period in England serfdom was widespread; slaves as a rule had risen to the rank of serfs, and many freemen had sunk to serfdom; furthermore, as has been seen, great differences had developed in the social status of those on the manors. But serfdom began to decline, for many

serfs bought their way to freedom, others were freed through philanthropic or religious motives, and still others ran away. Tenants were released from their compulsory labor on the demesne, and could thus devote all their time to their own land, and rents, formerly paid in kind, had been widely converted into cash contracts. The Black Death (1348-1350) carried off almost one-half of the population, and left an extremely small supply of labor for all enterprises. The serfs as a group were becoming conscious of their status, and were manifesting a universal desire for freedom. The first of the "Statutes for Laborers," which was enacted in 1351, did not satisfy them, and the Peasants' Rebellion followed in 1381. All these social factors, combined with a major economic consideration—namely, that manor farming was becoming increasingly unprofitable, yielding commodities but little actual cash—served to establish the great majority of cultivators on the land as free tenants.<sup>9</sup>

**The Enclosure System.**—With the downfall of the manorial system, a new system of agriculture appeared in England. Land holdings tended to increase in size, and animal husbandry, especially sheep raising, began to replace the intensive farming characteristic of the manorial system—the almost inevitable result of the depletion of the labor supply by the Black Death. This type of agriculture made possible the use of much land which had hitherto been waste land, and was responsible for the enclosure system. Large concentrated holdings were encouraged and became the rule; many small landholders, dispossessed because for some reason or other their tenure was insecure, became farm laborers or abandoned farming completely. At first the enclosure system was encouraged by the government, and, although it was later fought by both statute and public opinion, it continued for a century and a half. It left in its wake the almost complete breakdown of the village economy which had had its beginnings many years before the feudal system was introduced, and which had become the chief form of rural social organization under the manorial system.

**The Dawn of the Industrial Revolution.**—When town life was again established in England, it was an entirely different kind, because the influences which might be called the seeds of the

<sup>9</sup> Ogg, F. A., and Sharp, W. R., *Economic Development of Modern Europe*, The Macmillan Company, New York, 1926, pp. 24-28.

Industrial Revolution were germinating. The feudal system, the old economy, and consequently the old society, were gone. The old regime had rested upon landed monopoly, but now new occupations and enterprises were arising. By 1300 the serfs—millions of them—had become freemen, if the peasants were not actually freeholders, they were at least free tenants, and the artisans or handicraftsmen of the old manors were now free workmen living in the towns. In addition, powerful merchants had arisen with the new commercial and industrial economy. Everyone was interested in freedom—the merchants and artisans because they wanted not slaves but an employee class, and the noblemen because they found it impossible to carry the burden of all the classes as they had in feudal times and still compete successfully in a society in which a money economy was becoming dominant. Some knights and landed proprietors moved into towns and there became mercantile barons. Thus began the turn in England's history which has led from a nation, 75 to 90 per cent of whose population was concerned in some way with agriculture during the feudal period, to one only 7 per cent of whose people is today engaged in farming; and thus also began the turn of events which has given her her present form of rural society. Gras gives an admirable brief survey:

Gradually after about 1450, and rapidly since about 1760, the threefold system of landlord, tenant-farmer, and agricultural laborer has been developing in England. The lord lives away from the manor in most cases, the tenant-farmer comes to have a separate homestead near or on his holding; and the agricultural laborer is left to occupy the rude cottages of the old-time village. The landlord supplies the land and permanent improvements such as houses, barns, stables, hedges, and large drains, while the tenant-farmer furnishes the capital for livestock, machinery, and operating expenses, and the knowledge of cultivation and marketing. The laborer has only his labor to offer, and for this he receives a very low wage. His cottage is frequently inadequate and his outlook for the future without hope of improvement. His failure is in part the price that England has paid for the advantages enjoyed by the landlords and the farmer class. Of course, the landlords and the tenant-farmers have made the contributions—they have been the hammers, while the laborers have lagged behind—they have been the anvils. Social selection allowed the lord to hold his own. Some tenants of capacity and ambi-

tion rose in the economic scale, and other tenants without ability or energy fell to the bottom of rural society

At the present time the English countryside is made up of palatial residences, scattered homesteads, and villages. The villages are occupied by farm laborers, tradesmen, a few tenant-farmers, and officials of landowners. The fine residences of the rich owners, and the scattered homesteads of the poor, or moderately circumstanced, farmers, are offshoots of the village, the former of the manor houses, the latter of the humble cottages of peasants. The number of homesteads built out in the fields and convenient for the practices of agricultural work has been increasing, ever since the enclosure movements enabled the cultivator to separate himself from his fellows. From the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries onward they have constituted the visible evidence of a more individualistic rural system and existence.<sup>10</sup>

The influences which in England led to the breakdown of the feudal and manorial systems, to the rise of commerce and industry, and to the establishment of a so-called free agricultural class, were also active throughout all Europe. It was during this transition period that colonies were established in America by those who were leaving their old social status and their old homes across the ocean to people a new continent and to build a new rural society.

#### THE BEGINNING OF AMERICAN RURAL CULTURE

**New England and the Virginia Settlements.**—Colonization in America was only incidental in the expansion of other nations, but it was more than incidental in the case of England. Not only did England contribute more settlers than any other country, but she also laid the foundation of the social and political structure of the new colonies in the town system of government evolved in her colonies in New England, and in the county system evolved in her Virginia settlements. The county system became the more prevalent social and political structure because the later settlements penetrated areas which physiographically resembled Virginia rather than New England.

In New England, agriculture, in which most of the people were engaged, tended at first to follow somewhat that on the English manor. Farm tools were hand made and crude, consisting chiefly of broad hoes, mattocks and forks. "The Pilgrim had no plows

<sup>10</sup> Gras, N S B., *op. cit.*, pp. 174-175.



for twelve years and they were scarce throughout the century. To the modern farmer they would seem of little use—great clumsy wooden contrivances with which four or six oxen and two men scratched the topsoil to a depth of three inches over an acre of land in a day."<sup>11</sup>

Artisans were scarce, and so "attained a degree of well-being unheard of in England and rare in all ages."<sup>12</sup> Salt refining, some iron mining and manufacturing, ship building, carpentering, shoe making, blacksmithing, coopering, milling, tanning and bricklaying were the earliest forms of specialization. "Many times an artisan was also a farmer, but in most cases, versatile though he might be, he gave most of his attention to his trade."<sup>13</sup> Although there were attempts to maintain the class distinctions of the old country in colonial government, church and community life, these were for the most part soon overshadowed by the leveling process of pioneer life and the social organization of the town.<sup>14</sup> Men whose social status had been low before their emigration soon found it greatly advanced because of their comparatively easy success in farming or their value to the colony as specialists or artisans.

In Virginia and Maryland, on the other hand, the early discovery of the profit in tobacco culture and the demand of the planters for many unskilled laborers developed an entirely different type of economic, social and political structure. The land which could be had almost for the asking, and the use of huge labor forces on the plantations, quickly developed an extensive agricultural system. Thousands of free laborers, indentured servants and, later, slaves were brought in—it is estimated that between 1635 and 1705 from 100,000 to 400,000 laborers, excluding slaves, came to Virginia.<sup>15</sup> The quickness and ease with which, in Virginia and the colonies farther south, indentured servants became freemen and freeholders, established a society with no sharp line of demarcation between the classes.<sup>16</sup>

Thus, in both types of colonial settlement there was the development of rural societies with the beginnings of economic differen-

<sup>11</sup> Wertenbaker, T. J., *The First Americans, 1607-1690*, The Macmillan Company, New York, 1927, p. 58.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 70.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 60.

<sup>14</sup> For a brief description of a New England village, see *ibid.*, pp. 85-86.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 25; information from the Register of Land Office, Richmond, Va.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 35.

tiation, but the tendency in this development was toward a socially democratic organization. According to Adams, "In spite of excessive self-consciousness and inter-colonial jealousies, which are characteristic of all young commonwealths at a certain stage of their existence, there was a greater uniformity in the warp and woof of social fabric in 1690 along the entire seaboard than at any subsequent time until perhaps our own."<sup>17</sup>

The first homes of the settlers in New England were dugouts and log cabins with thatched roofs and, in the southern colonies, log cabins and, sometimes, rock houses. Indian trails provided the first roads, and these trails were later widened into paths and then made into roads suitable for wagons. The rivers and creeks, which subsequently proved invaluable for freight traffic, were serious obstacles to overland travel, for foot and horseback were the usual means, vehicles being few and crude and consisting for the most part of carts and boats. The chief social institutions were the church and the tavern.

**Sources of the American Colonial Population.**—The sources and increase of the population of the colonies cannot be known accurately, although it is estimated that in 1690 there were 220,000 white people in this country and that by 1760 this figure had increased to 1,500,000.<sup>18</sup> The following data, however, are probably fairly accurate:

Virginia	1649	15,000
	1662	40,000
	1698	58,040
Massachusetts	1643	16,000
	1658	30,000
	1700	60,000
Connecticut	1643	5,500
	1689-1700	20,000
New York	1664	7,000
	1689	18,067
Maryland	1660	8,000
	1701	32,000
Rhode Island	1658	1,200
	1708	7,181 <sup>19</sup>
Other colonies	1700	15,000-20,000

<sup>17</sup> Adams, J. T., *Provincial Society, 1690-1763*, The Macmillan Company, New York, 1927, p. 4.

<sup>18</sup> Bassett, J. S., *A Short History of the United States*, The Macmillan Company, New York, 1929, p. 101.

<sup>19</sup> Wertenbaker, T. J., *op. cit.*, p. 313.

By combining these data we can estimate the population of the colonies as about 25,000 in 1640; 80,000 in 1660; and over 200,000 in 1700. The first federal census was taken in 1790, and gave 3,929,214 as the population of this country.

Prior to 1800, the colonists came mainly from England, Germany, France and Holland; the family names on the registers of the first census show that more than 90 per cent were of British stock, 80 per cent were English, and 6 per cent German. However, both Spanish and French colonists actually antedated the English in their arrival on this continent, but these settlements were for the most part not permanent and consequently were not points of dispersion for the settlement of other areas. It was the compact English settlements of the Atlantic seaboard, of which farmers constituted at least 90 per cent, that were the source of the systematic settlement of what is now the United States; and English customs and institutions, somewhat modified, it is true, naturally exerted a strong influence on the social development of America for about two centuries.<sup>20</sup>

**Early Population Movements.**—At the end of the American Revolution (1783) the seaboard colonies claimed the territory from the Atlantic Ocean on the east to the Mississippi River on the west, and from the Great Lakes on the north to the Gulf of Mexico on the south, excluding Florida. Settlement west of the Atlantic coast line varied in depth, but in the main it extended no farther than the Appalachian Mountains and averaged about 250 miles inland.

Following the early settlements at Plymouth, Jamestown, Massachusetts Bay, and Salem, the population flowed chiefly up the Mohawk and Hudson Valleys into what is now New York State, up the Great Valley of our present State of Pennsylvania, toward the Appalachians, down the Shenandoah Valley, up the Potomac and Ohio Valleys, and around the southern end of the Appalachian barrier into the Cumberland Valley of what later became Tennessee. In 1790 there were settlers in all of the larger river valleys east of the Appalachians, and settlements had been made west of these mountains in Kentucky, West Virginia and Tennessee; there were also some scattered trading and military outposts in the upper Mississippi Valley and around the Great

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 11-12

Lakes and, in addition, the Spanish settlements in Florida and the southwest, and a number of widely scattered French settlements

Although prior to the Revolutionary War, all these colonies were regarded by the European mother countries only as colonies, many of the colonists regarded them as free settlements—the beginning of one or several new nations. As Wertenbaker says, "From the womb of this Century [the 17th] was born a new order of men—the first Americans . . . . The vast distances between the two continents, the development of distinct interests, the adoption of an imperial policy which subordinated the welfare of the Colonies to that of the mother country, the growth of separate customs, points of view, dialects, occupations and religious organizations—all tended to this end. Thus, while the white settlers were transforming America, America was transforming the settlers. It found them English and by its irresistible alchemy, it made them Americans."<sup>21</sup>

And, further, "All in all, the men of the seventeenth century did well the task which fate assigned them. Their failures, such as they were, are readily explained by the peculiar conditions of their life. When the inventory of their accomplishments is taken, it bulks large in the history of American life. Their arduous labors in conquering the wilderness, their hardships and sufferings, were not in vain, for they planted firmly on the northwestern shores of the Atlantic the standard of European civilization, and laid the broad foundations of nationality upon which future generations were to erect the mighty structure of the United States."<sup>22</sup>

### QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

- 1 In what ways, if any, did this country, during the period of its settlement, repeat any of the experiences which this and the preceding chapter describe as having occurred in other countries?
- 2 Why did the American colonists not set up a manorial system of agriculture and rural life?
- 3 In so far as you know, would you say that European serfdom was superior to the system of rural life in ancient times?
- 4 What caused the breakdown of the manorial system in England?
- 5 Discuss the differences between town life in England before and after the Industrial Revolution.
- 6 What reasons prevented the adoption of the New England town system in Virginia?

<sup>21</sup> Wertenbaker, T. J., *op cit*, p. 304.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid*, p. 316.

- 7 What characteristics of European origin remained in American life after the Revolutionary War? Are there any at present?
- 8 What is meant by the statement that the American colonist was a new type of man?

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## CHAPTER IV

### THE PEOPLE OF THE RURAL UNITED STATES

#### THE NUMBER AND GENERAL CLASSES OF THE RURAL POPULATION

**The Increase of Population in the United States.**—The first census of the United States was taken in 1790, and showed a population of 3,929,214, which had increased to 122,775,046 by 1930, as shown in Table 1. It is estimated that until 1830 the increase was due primarily to the number of native births and, from then on, to immigration. The center of the national population has shifted steadily westward decade by decade, in 1930 being located in southwestern Indiana. The rural population center in 1930 was in southern Illinois, about 100 miles southwest of the national center. This shift is the result of the migration westward from the earlier settled areas and, from 1830 to 1900 especially, of the movement of immigrants to the fertile midwestern lands.

The national population in 1790 was almost entirely rural, being supported directly from the soil. Thus agriculture was the only industry of importance, only six cities showed a population of 8000 people. Nor was there any great disturbance in the rural-urban ratios during the following ninety years, for in 1880 the rural population still constituted 70.5 per cent of the national. However, since that date there has been a constant and somewhat consistent relative decrease, for in 1930 the percentage of the rural population was only 43.8.

**The Census Classification of Rural and Urban Populations.**—The census classification of population has never provided a satisfactory means for the accurate analysis of the rural population and its characteristics. Many of the census reports include as rural, in addition to those who actually live on farms, the inhabitants of both incorporated and unincorporated towns and villages of less than 2500 population. The 1920 census lists as "rural" the more than 20 million residents of places of less than

## 58 THE PEOPLE OF THE RURAL UNITED STATES

TABLE I.—POPULATIONS AND POPULATION INCREASE IN CONTINENTAL UNITED STATES, 1790-1930<sup>1</sup>

Census Year	Population	Increase over Preceding Census	
		Number	Per Cent
1790	3,929,214		
1800	5,308,483	1,379,269	35 1
1810	7,239,881	1,931,398	36 4
1820	9,638,453	2,398,572	33 1
1830	12,866,020	3,227,567	33 5
1840	17,069,453	4,203,433	32 7
1850	23,191,876	6,122,423	35 9
1860	31,443,321	8,251,445	35 6
1870	38,558,371	7,115,050	22 6
1880	50,155,783	11,597,412	30 1
1890	62,947,714	12,791,931	25 5
1900	75,994,575	13,046,861	20 7
1910	91,972,266	15,977,691	21 0
1920	105,710,620	13,738,354	14 9
1930	122,775,046	17,064,426	16 1*

\* The period of census taking from 1910-1920 was slightly over 10 years, and the period from 1920-1930 slightly less than 10 years, due to a change from January 1st to April 1st as the date of beginning the classification.

2500 population, and when the 1930 census was taken, this figure had increased to more than 23 million. Such a classification designates as "rural" thousands of people who are not farmers, for there are countless mining, fishing, and even small manufacturing villages whose inhabitants are only indirectly—if at all—interested in agriculture; and there are thousands of other people in towns and villages who are closely related to agriculture, in that their sole or chief occupations have to do with what may be called the middle processes in agriculture—buying and selling farm products or serving farmers in business and professional ways, but who are not farmers.

A further difficulty is found in the variation of the census classifications themselves. The census reports from 1790 to 1870, inclusive, listed as rural the residents of all towns with populations of less than 8000; in the 1890 census the rural population included "all persons living outside all closely settled places having 1000 inhabitants or more." In 1910 this classification was again

<sup>1</sup> *Fifteenth Census of the United States, 1930, vol. i, Population, p. 6.*

changed, this time to include all who lived in the open country and in towns or villages, of whatsoever type, of less than 2500; and this was also the basis of the 1920 classification.<sup>2</sup> The 1930 census classified as urban those areas whose political subdivisions—townships and unincorporated places—“had a total population of 10,000 or over, with a population density of 1000 or more per square mile” Thus, in 1930 the aggregate population of 28 places, which would have been rural under the 1920 classification, was 573,329.<sup>3</sup> Equally inadequate was the 1925 Census of Agriculture which obtained information only for “farm population,” for this term was so defined as to exclude some who were actual tillers of the soil—the urban-dwelling farmers

To some the most adequate measure of urban and rural elements in the national population is those gainfully employed in urban and rural occupations. In 1930, 21.47 per cent of all those gainfully employed were engaged in agriculture.<sup>4</sup>

The impossibility of any adequate long-time analysis of our actual rural population is apparent. However, approximations can be and have been made by reducing these data to common terms as far as possible, and it is from such studies, together with statistics from detailed field studies, that the material in the following tables is taken

TABLE 2.—DISTRIBUTION OF NATIONAL POPULATION BETWEEN RURAL AND URBAN AREAS SINCE 1880<sup>a</sup>

Year	Rural Population, Per Cent	Urban Population, Per Cent
1880	71.4	28.6
1890	64.6	35.4
1900	60.0	40.0
1910	54.2	45.8
1920	48.6	51.4
1930	43.8	56.2

The 1930 census listed 53,820,223 people, or 43.8 per cent of the total national population, as living in rural areas, and of these

<sup>a</sup> Truesdell, L. E., *Farm Population of the United States*, Census Monographs VI, Bureau of Census, 1920.

<sup>b</sup> See *Fifteenth Census*, vol. 1, Population, p. 7.

<sup>c</sup> “Gainful Workers in the United States by Industry Groups,” Bureau of Census Release, Sept. 9, 1931.



24.6 per cent lived in the open country. Table 2 presents data on the rural-urban population trend for the last six decades.

This decline in percentage of the rural population does not indicate that American rural society and its problems are less important than formerly, for although the *farm* population has been larger in the past, as will be seen later, our *rural* population today is larger than at any previous time in our national history.

**Classes within the Rural Population.**—It is apparent that there are a number of classes within what the census designates as the rural population: the farmers and their families, the open-country dwellers who are not farmers, and the non-agricultural inhabitants of towns and villages of less than 2500 population. On the other hand, there are the inhabitants of places classified by the census as urban, but whose primary interests nevertheless have to do with agriculture.

The *farm population*, according to the 1920 census, "includes all persons actually living on farms, without regard to occupation, and also laborers (and their families) who, while not living on a farm, nevertheless live in strictly rural territory, outside the limits of any city or other incorporated place,"<sup>6</sup> and the 1930 census approximates this same group in its "*rural-farm*" classification, under which are included farm dwellers, regardless of occupation. In 1920 the farm population included 31,614,269 individuals, or 29.9 per cent of the total national population. The "*rural-farm*" population of the 1930 census was 30,157,513, or 24.6 per cent, but how many were following non-agricultural pursuits is not known. However, it is undoubtedly this group which comes near to being the one meant when we speak of "country people."

Village (*rural non-farm*) populations cannot be definitely classified as agricultural or non-agricultural, for the census makes no such differentiation. In the 1920 census there were 20,047,377 persons included in the rural non-farm population—in other words, almost two-fifths (39 per cent) of those classified as rural were village dwellers. According to the 1930 census, this population group numbered 23,662,710 on April 1, 1930.

The *urban farm* population includes all those who live in incorporated places which the census classifies as urban, but who nevertheless are farmers. In 1930 there were 290,037 people in this classification; however, they constituted less than one per cent of

<sup>6</sup> *Fifteenth Census*, vol. i, Population, p. 16.

<sup>7</sup> Truesdell, *op. cit.*, p. 35.

the total urban population and increased the nation's actual farm population by less than one per cent.

Probably the most feasible means of overcoming the difficulty in the face of the varying classifications of rural peoples is to use the 1930 census classification (1) rural ~~farm~~ population, (2) rural non-farm, or village, population, and (3) urban population. The statistics in Table 3 will aid in analyzing the national population on this basis. According to these figures, the national

TABLE 3.—FARM, VILLAGE AND URBAN POPULATION OF THE UNITED STATES,

Class	Number	Per Cent Distribution
Total Population	122,775,046	100 0
Urban Population	68,954,823	56 2
Rural Population (total)	53,820,223	43 8
Incorporated places, 1000-2500	4,820,707	3 9
Incorporated places under 1000	4,362,746	3 6
Other rural territory	44,636,770	36 4

population was distributed as follows. 56.2 per cent, urban, 7 5 per cent, village, and 36 4 per cent, open country. But even these statistics do not give an accurate picture, for they exclude the residents of unincorporated villages.

**Data from Detailed Population Studies.**—B. L. Melvin has studied the rural population of New York<sup>7</sup> at first hand, and although his data may not be typical of other rural sections of the United States, they do nevertheless contribute specific and detailed information for the areas under study, and, further, they indicate clearly the inadequacy of the census classification.

Melvin limits the term "village" to places with populations of from 50 to 2500 inhabitants, using "hamlet" to designate any place with 50 or less, and he classifies the area's total population, listed by the federal census under the general term "rural," into "incorporated village," "unincorporated village," "institutional," and "open-country" population. Table 4 presents a detailed classi-

<sup>7</sup> *Fifteenth Census*, vol 1, Population, p 14.

<sup>8</sup> Melvin, B. L., *Rural Population of New York, 1855 to 1925*, Memoir 116, June, 1928, and *Rural Population, Tompkins and Schuyler Counties, New York, 1925*, March, 1929, Cornell University Agricultural Experiment Station, Ithaca, New York.

## 62 THE PEOPLE OF THE RURAL UNITED STATES

TABLE 4.—DISTRIBUTION OF RURAL POPULATION (TOMPKINS AND SCHUYLER COUNTIES, NEW YORK) IN INCORPORATED VILLAGES, UNINCORPORATED VILLAGES, INSTITUTIONS AND OPEN COUNTRY\*

	Population	Per Cent Total
Rural	31,148	100 0
Incorporated villages	7,172	23 0
Unincorporated villages	4,688	15 0
Institutions	379	1 2+
Open country.	18,909	60 7

fication of his data on this basis. The total number of farmers in these two counties, as listed by the 1925 Census of Agriculture, which used only farm population as a basis, was higher by 3354 individuals than Melvin obtained in his count of actual farm people. Using his own classification, he found that 31 per cent of the rural population of Tompkins and Schuyler Counties were non-farming, as shown in Table 5, and 59.9 per cent of the population of the township of Ithaca, in Tompkins County, was non-farming.

TABLE 5.—DISTRIBUTION OF OPEN-COUNTRY POPULATION BETWEEN FARMING AND NON-FARMING (TOMPKINS AND SCHUYLER COUNTIES, NEW YORK)

	Open-country Population	Farming Population		Non-farming Population	
			Per Cent		Per Cent
Both counties	18,909	13,038	68 9	5,871	31 0
Tompkins County	12,445	8,050	64 6	4,395	35 3
Schuyler County	6,464	4,988	77 1	1,476	22 8

Truesdell also made a considerably detailed analysis of the rural population. He divided it as a whole into "farm" and "village" populations, subdividing the latter into those of "small incorporated places" (less than 2500 inhabitants) and "unincorporated territory." On this basis he found that 29.9 per cent lived on farms, 19.0 per cent in villages, and 51.1 per cent in towns or cities of over 2500 inhabitants. Of the village population, 44.7 per cent

\* Melvin, B. L., *Rural Population, Tompkins and Schuyler Counties*, p. 9.

lived in incorporated areas, and 55.3 per cent in unincorporated territory. The practice of the individual states in regard to incorporation is far from uniform, and there is therefore a corresponding variation in these statistics for different sections of the country. For example, in Nebraska in 1920, 89.4 per cent of the village population lived in incorporated places; this was true of only 21 per cent of the village population of Virginia, notwithstanding the fact that the density of population is much greater in Virginia than in Nebraska.<sup>10</sup> It is thus apparent that, without a uniform basis of classification or a far more detailed analysis and interpretation of the existing statistics, it is impossible to determine definitely what percentage of the population is actually rural-farm. An attempt has been made in this direction by the 1930 census in the rural-farm population class, which uses residence as its basis of classification.

Brunner and Kolb say that there are approximately 19,000 villages in the United States with a population from 250 to 2500, that almost 8500 of them are unincorporated, containing more than four million inhabitants, and that about four and one-half million additional live in hamlets of less than 250 population each.<sup>11</sup>

**Geographic Distribution of Rural and Farm Population.**—The percentage of the total population that is rural varies widely in the different sections of the country, ranging from as high as 71.9 in the East South Central division to as low as 22.3 in the Middle Atlantic. The variation in the individual states is equally great, North Dakota is high, with 83.4 per cent, and Rhode Island is low, with 7.6 per cent.<sup>12</sup>

It is seen from Table 6 that the East South Central division—Kentucky, Tennessee, Alabama and Mississippi—is the most rural section of the country, but the six most rural states, according to the 1930 classification, are North Dakota, 83.4 per cent; Mississippi, 83.1; South Dakota, 81.1, Arkansas, 79.4; South Carolina, 78.7; and New Mexico, 74.8. The six most urban states are Rhode Island, 92.4 per cent, Massachusetts, 90.2, New York, 83.6; New Jersey, 82.6; California, 73.3, and Connecticut,

<sup>10</sup> Truesdell, *op. cit.*, pp. 55, 59.

<sup>11</sup> Brunner, E. de S., and Kolb, J. H., *Recent Social Trends*, McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc., New York, 1933, p. 18.

<sup>12</sup> *Fifteenth Census*, vol. i, Population, p. 15.

## 64 THE PEOPLE OF THE RURAL UNITED STATES

TABLE 6.—PERCENTAGES OF POPULATION CLASSIFIED AS RURAL AND URBAN, BY GEOGRAPHIC DIVISIONS, 1930<sup>13</sup>

Geographic Division	Rural	Urban
United States	43 8	56 2
New England	22 7	77 3
Middle Atlantic	22 3	77 7
East North Central	33 6	66 4
West North Central	58 2	41 8
South Atlantic	63 9	36 1
East South Central	71 9	28 1
West South Central	63 9	36 1
Mountain	60 9	39 1
Pacific	32 5	67 5

70.4 The six states with the greatest gross totals of rural population are, in order, Texas, Pennsylvania, North Carolina, Ohio, New York and Georgia. If village populations are excluded from the rural classification, the urban sections become even more predominantly urban and the rural sections more predominantly rural than indicated by the above data. That this is true is due chiefly to two facts: first, many more individuals employed in urban industries live in industrial areas in the country than in predominantly agricultural areas, and, second, a higher percentage of those who are actually industrial workers live in villages which are in no sense agricultural but which are classified as rural by the census. For example, although 20 per cent of the total population of New England in 1925 was classified as rural, only 8.5 per cent was listed as farm population, and only 9.1 per cent of the gainfully employed males were engaged in agriculture. In the East South Central division the rural population was 71.9 per cent of the total population, the farm population was 58.3, but only 56.5 per cent of all gainfully employed males were following agricultural pursuits. In Mississippi 81.8 per cent of all those classified as rural actually lived on farms outside incorporated places, whereas in Connecticut this was true of only 20.3 per cent of those classified as rural.<sup>14</sup>

The best index of the actual agricultural population is, in many respects, the percentage of the gainfully employed engaged in

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 15<sup>14</sup> Truesdell, *op. cit.*, p. 40.

## THE PEOPLE OF THE RURAL UNITED STATES 65

agriculture, since in it can be included those working on farms and living in towns or cities, and from it can be excluded those living on farms but not engaged in farming. The last column of Table 7 presents this index, and a comparison of the three columns shows the variation between rurality as measured by this index and by the different census classifications. It is evident from

TABLE 7.—SHOWING DIFFERENT WAYS OF MEASURING DEGREE OF RURALNESS, BY GEOGRAPHIC DIVISIONS OF THE UNITED STATES, 1930<sup>18</sup>

Geographic Division	Per Cent Rural	Per Cent Farm	Per Cent Gainfully Employed Males Employed in Agriculture
New England	22 7	7 0	8 3
Middle Atlantic	22 3	6 5	6 8
East North Central	33 6	17 7	17 6
West North Central	58 2	38 1	40 2
South Atlantic	63 9	37 3	38 9
East South Central	71 9	51 5	51 3
West South Central	63 9	43 7	44 9
Mountain	60 9	30 8	35 9
Pacific ..	32 5	14 0	17 6

this table that, regardless of the index used, the East South Central division constitutes the most rural section of the country. The West South Central—Arkansas, Louisiana, Oklahoma and Texas—ranks second on the basis of farm population and of gainfully employed males, but both the West North Central and the South Atlantic divisions rank higher when rural population is used as an index.

### COMPOSITION OF THE AMERICAN RURAL POPULATION

**Sex Composition.**—There are over two million more males than females in the rural population of this country. This is due not so much to the fact that farming is predominantly a man's occupation, as that there are few rural occupations open to women, practically every business opportunity for a woman, except teaching, being urban. This is borne out by the greater urban proportion of women to men, and also by the higher percentage of women

<sup>18</sup> *Fifteenth Census, Population Bulletin, Second Series, United States Summary, 1931, Tables 38, 54, and vol. 1, Population, Table 9*

## 66 THE PEOPLE OF THE RURAL UNITED STATES

in the more industrialized eastern states than in the western states. The data in Table 8 summarize the ratio between males and females.

TABLE 8—DISTRIBUTION BY MAJOR DIVISIONS, 1930<sup>14</sup>

Division	Number of Males to 100 Females			
	Total Population	Farm Population	Rural Population	Urban Population
United States	102 5	111 0	105 0	98 1
New England	97 2	115 5	101 3	95 0
Middle Atlantic	100 9	115 0	104 3	99 1
East North Central	104 1	115 2	105 6	101 1
West North Central	104 2	116 1	101 4	95 7
South Atlantic	99 6	104 8	102 4	92 6
East South Central	100 2	104 9	100 3	92 0
West South Central	103 3	109 0	104 2	96 4
Mountain	111 3	121 2	116 2	100 8
Pacific	108 7	127 9	122 6	101 8

The following clear tendencies appear from a study of this table: (1) The number of males per 100 females is greater in farm than in urban populations in every geographical division. (2) The ratio of males to females is higher in farm than in rural populations. (3) This ratio likewise is higher in the rural population of each division than in the corresponding urban population. (4) The males in all population groups of the far-western states—the Mountain and Pacific divisions—are far more numerous than in the eastern states—the New England, East South Central, East Central and South Atlantic divisions.

An analysis of the individual states included in each division gives additional information on the interpretation of sex ratios in the rural population. The census tables are too elaborate to present here, and therefore only a few cases are given. For instance, the New England division is composed of predominantly rural states, like Maine, New Hampshire and Vermont, and predominantly industrial states like Massachusetts and Rhode Island. Taking Maine and Rhode Island as examples, the number of males per 100 females is as follows:

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, Table 42.

## THE PEOPLE OF THE RURAL UNITED STATES 67

	Total Population	Rural Farm	Rural Non-farm	Urban
Maine.	101 3	114 5	103 5	93 3
Rhode Island	95 2	112 5	99 4	94 7

Apparently a factor is present in Rhode Island which is absent in Maine, and this factor probably is the occupational opportunities for women in urban, and particularly village, industrial life. Figures for the Mountain division will illustrate further the facts revealed by this type of detailed analysis. Colorado with its considerable industrial population is therefore compared with Wyoming, one of the most predominantly rural states in the country, and the ratio of males per 100 females is found to be:

	Total Population	Rural Farm	Rural Non-farm	Urban
Colorado	105 1	118 8	111 5	95 8
Wyoming	123 8	133 4	128 4	109 9

The cities of Colorado, compared with its villages and farms, have noticeably fewer males than females. In Wyoming, on the other hand, the cities do not seem to attract females to the extent that the more industrialized Colorado cities do, for there is a pronounced excess of males in the urban as well as the farm populations.

It is doubtful whether communities in which the ratio is higher for one sex than for the other are much different from those in which the ratio is about equal, our cities cannot be said to be feminized, or our rural communities to be dominantly masculine. For example, in Gary, Indiana, the sex ratio of males to females is 119.1—for every 10,000 females there are 11,900 males. In Nashville, Tennessee, there are only 87.8 males per 100 females—for every 10,000 females there are 8,780 males.<sup>17</sup> When considered in this light, it is apparent that no pronounced abnormalities in the social life of either city are to be expected because of these differences. The significance of such data lies not in the result on community life, but in the causes of selectivity, and we shall therefore consider the selective factors which are responsible for the unequal sex ratio in the rural areas. (1) It must be remembered that there are 102.5 males per 100 females in the total national population itself. The theories accounting for this need not be presented here, but it should be realized that this inequality is characteristic of the national population as a whole, and not of

<sup>17</sup>*Ibid.*, Table 60



## 68 THE PEOPLE OF THE RURAL UNITED STATES

the rural population alone. (2) Occupational opportunity is undoubtedly a selective factor, for the opportunities for female specialized employment are found primarily in the city, the country offers few such opportunities. (3) Another factor is the educational, social and other cultural advantages which the city offers, which have a special appeal to women and which are lacking in rural life. (4) Another cause, as will be seen later, is found in the fact that most immigrants settle in urban districts

**Age Composition.**—The age distribution of the rural population, in comparison with that of the rural non-farm and the urban populations, is of considerably greater significance than the sex distribution. In the first place, the variations between urban and rural age groups are greater than in the case of the sex ratios, and, in the second place, these variations, as we shall see, probably have a deeper social significance

TABLE 9 —PER CENT DISTRIBUTION OF FARM, VILLAGE AND URBAN POPULATION OF THE UNITED STATES, BY AGE, FOR 1930<sup>18</sup>

	Per Cent Distribution			
	Total Population	Rural Farm	Rural Non-farm	Urban
All ages	100 0	100 0	100 0	100 0
Under 5 years	9 3	11 1	10 5	8 2
Under 1 year	1 8	2 1	2 0	1 6
5 to 9 years	10 3	12 5	11 1	9 0
10 to 14 years	9 8	12 4	9 8	8 6
15 to 19 years	9 4	11 3	8 9	8 7
20 to 24 years	8 9	8 1	8 5	9 3
25 to 29 years	8 0	6 0	7 8	9 0
30 to 34 years	7 4	5 5	7 1	8 4
35 to 44 years	14 0	11 4	12 9	15 5
45 to 54 years	10 6	9 8	9 9	11 2
55 to 64 years	6 8	6 6	6 9	6 9
65 to 74 years	3 8	3 7	4 5	3 7
75 years and over	1 6	1 5	2 1	1 4
Unknown	0 1	0 0	0 1	0 1
21 and over	59 4	50 8	58 1	63 7

The data in Table 9 make apparent some important differences between the age composition of the farm, the rural non-farm, and

<sup>18</sup> Bureau of Census Release, September 8, 1931

the urban populations. (1) The relatively high proportion (23.6 per cent) of the individuals under 10 years of age classified as farm people, in contrast with the 17.2 per cent for the urban, and 21.6 per cent for the rural non-farm populations. (2) The slightly lower proportion (8.1 per cent) of farm people in the age groups 20-24, in contrast with 9.3 per cent for the urban, and 8.5 for the village populations.

Further interpretations of this table are worth while. If the data are considered under three age groups only, the results are as follows.

	Rural Farm	Rural Non-farm	Urban
Group I			
Under 20 years	47.2	40.3	34.5
Group II			
20-64 years	47.6	53.1	60.3
Group III			
Over 65 years	5.2	6.7	5.2

It is thus apparent that the country has an excess of children, the city an excess of middle-aged, and the villages slightly more than their share of the aged. The cities gain from both the farms and the villages in the middle-age groups, and the villages gain slightly from the farm in this same age group. And, with minor variations, these trends hold in all the geographic divisions of the nation.

Table 10 presents data on the ratio of males and females in the age groups of these three classes of the population. These data provide additional information on the sex distribution, and this is important, since it is of some significance to know which sex is more responsible for the unequal sex ratio in the different age groups. Thus in the early age groups, the excess of females over males is greater in the farm than in the urban population, and this differential continues through the 10-14 age group; however, in the next group, 15-19 years, the males exceed the females in the farm population, but the females exceed the males in both village and urban populations. The women in the older age groups—from 35 years on—show a consistent tendency to drift to the city, and this tendency continues, although it lags as the women grow older. There is likewise a higher ratio of urban men to farm men until the age group 45-54 years is reached; after this, the percentage of rural males begins to exceed the urban, and this continues until the end of life. The village percentages fall be-

## 70 THE PEOPLE OF THE RURAL UNITED STATES

TABLE 10.—PERCENTAGES OF MALE AND FEMALE, BY AGE GROUPS, IN FARM VILLAGE AND URBAN POPULATION OF THE UNITED STATES, 1930<sup>19</sup>

Age Groups	Farm			Village			Urban		
	Both Sexes	Male	Female	Both Sexes	Male	Female	Both Sexes	Male	Female
Under 5 years	11 1	10 7	11 5	10 5	10 4	10 6	8 2	8 4	8 0
Under 1 year	2 1	2 0	2 2	2 0	2 0	2 0	1 0	1 6	1 5
5 to 9 years	12 5	12 1	13 0	11 1	10 9	11 2	9 0	9 2	8 9
10 to 14 years	12 4	12 2	12 7	9 8	9 6	9 9	8 6	8 7	8 6
15 to 19 years	11 3	11 5	11 1	8 9	8 6	9 3	8 7	8 4	9 0
20 to 24 years	8 1	8 3	7 9	8 5	8 2	8 8	9 3	8 9	9 7
25 to 29 years	6 0	5 9	6 2	7 8	7 7	7 9	9 0	8 8	9 1
30 to 34 years	5 5	5 3	5 9	7 1	7 1	7 0	8 4	8 4	8 4
35 to 44 years	11 4	11 0	11 8	12 9	13 4	12 5	15 5	16 0	15 1
45 to 54 years	9 8	10 1	9 5	9 9	10 4	9 4	11 2	11 5	10 8
55 to 64 years	6 6	7 3	5 9	6 9	7 1	6 7	6 9	6 9	6 9
65 to 74 years	3 7	4 1	3 1	4 5	4 5	4 4	3 7	3 5	3 9
75 and over	1 5	1 6	1 4	2 1	2 1	2 2	1 4	1 2	1 6
Unknown				0 1	0 1	0 1	0 1	0 1	0 1

tween those of the farm and urban groups except in two cases the percentage of females 45 to 54 years of age was lower for the villages than for farms or cities, and the percentage of both sexes of 65 years and over was higher for villages than for farms or cities.

**Ethnic Composition.**—The racial composition of the rural population is significant, since the prevalence of any one racial element may account for various outstanding social phenomena. There are three outstanding ethnic groups in the United States, the native whites, the Negroes, and the immigrants, in addition to these three main groups, there are the Indians, the Mexicans, a few Asiatics, and the mixtures of different races. At this point, however, we are interested only in those data which will help to present a concrete and somewhat detailed contrast of the composition of the farm, village and urban populations.

From the data in Table 11 it will be seen that the ethnic composition of the farm population differs greatly from that of the urban. For example, foreign-born whites comprise only 3.6 per

<sup>19</sup> Fifteenth Census, Population Bulletin, Second Series, United States Summary, 1931, Table 20

# THE PEOPLE OF THE RURAL UNITED STATES 71

TABLE 11—FARM, VILLAGE AND URBAN POPULATION OF THE UNITED STATES BY COLOR AND NATIONALITY, 1930<sup>20</sup>

Color and Nationality	Per Cent Distribution			
	United States	Urban	Farm	Village
White	88 7	91 1	82 5	89 4
Native born	77 8	75 6	78 9	82 8
Native parentage	57 1	48 6	68 0	68 2
Foreign or mixed parentage	20 7	27 0	11 0	14 6
Foreign parentage	13 8	18 8	6 5	8 8
Mixed parentage	6 8	8 2	4 5	5 7
Foreign born	10 9	15 6	3 6	6 6
Negro	9 7	7 5	15 5	8 5
Other races	1 6	1 3	2 0	2 1

cent of the farm population, whereas they constitute 15 6 per cent of the urban; the village population is intermediate, with 6 6 per cent Negroes constitute 15 5 per cent of the farm population, and only 7 5 per cent of the urban; the village is again intermediate, with 8 5 per cent.

Table 12 presents further detailed data, and reveals the following outstanding facts. (1) More than four-fifths of all foreign-born whites in the United States lived in urban centers,

TABLE 12—NUMBER AND PER CENT OF NATIVE, FOREIGN-BORN, NEGRO AND OTHER RACES RESIDING IN URBAN, FARM, AND VILLAGE AREAS OF THE UNITED STATES, 1930<sup>21</sup>

Color and Nativity	United States—Number	Urban		Rural			
		Number	Per Cent	Farm		Village	
				Number	Per Cent	Number	Per Cent
White	108,864,207	66,836,605	57 7	24,884,834	22 9	21,142,768	19 4
Native	95,497,800	52,109,746	54 6	23,800,747	24 9	19,587,307	20 5
Foreign born	13,366,407	10,726,859	80 3	1,084,087	8 1	1,555,461	11 6
Negro	11,891,143	5,193,913	43 7	4,680,523	39 4	2,016,707	17 0
Other races	2,019,696	924,305	45 8	592,156	29 3	503,235	24 9

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid*, Table 18

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid*, Table 4.

## 72 THE PEOPLE OF THE RURAL UNITED STATES

(2) over 56 per cent of the Negro population resided in rural areas, either on farms or in villages; and (3) this was true of almost 55 per cent of all those of other races. As would be expected from these figures, the native whites of foreign-born parentage form a much larger proportion of the urban than of the rural population—in 1930, of a total foreign-born population of 13,366,407, only 1,084,087, or 8.1 per cent, were on farms; on the other hand, 56.4 per cent of the Negro population in 1930 was rural, with 39.4 per cent actually on farms. The farm population, constituting 24.6 per cent of the national population, has 3 per cent more than its share of native whites, 14.8 per cent more of Negroes, and 4.7 per cent more of people of other races. Other data reveal that for the foreign-born and Negroes the ratio of males to females is higher in rural areas than in cities, but lower for the other races; for the foreign-born this ratio is higher on farms than in villages, but for the Negroes and other races it is higher in villages than either on farms or in cities.<sup>22</sup>

There is a wide variation in the ethnic composition of the farm population according to the geographic divisions of the United States.

	<i>Foreign-born Whites</i>	<i>Negroes</i>	<i>Other Races</i>
New England	relatively many	relatively few	few
Middle Atlantic	great number	relatively many	relatively small
East North Central	relatively few	relatively few	relatively great
West North Central	great many	relatively many	relatively many
South Atlantic	small number	very great number	small number
East South Central	very small number	relatively great	very small number
West South Central	small number	relatively great	great number
Mountain	relatively small	very few	great number
Pacific	slightly more than in Mountain states	very few	great number

In three sections—the New England, the West North Central and the Pacific—foreign-born whites constitute more than 10 per cent of the farm population, and in two—the South Atlantic and the East South Central—the foreign-born whites are few in number. Connecticut's percentage of the foreign-born in the farm population is 20.6, the highest of any state in the Union, South Carolina has the lowest, with less than .03. Negroes constitute 55.9 per cent of the farm population in Mississippi, and less than .02 per cent of that of North Dakota. Arizona's farm population contains

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, Table 39.

44.4 per cent of people of other races, in Kentucky, out of a farm population of over a million, there are only 4 per cent of those of other races actually living on farms.<sup>23</sup>

Table 13 not only presents data for the states whose farm population contains a fairly high percentage of other than native-born whites, but also shows the sources of immigration.

The following facts are apparent from a study of this table (1) The great majority of the foreign-born white farm operators of the United States came from Canada and from north European countries, chiefly Germany, Sweden and Norway (2) Wisconsin, Minnesota, and North and South Dakota have the highest percentage of foreign-born in their farm population. (3) There are a number of Italian and Russian farmers in this country, the Italians concentrating in southern New England, Nevada and California, and the Russians chiefly in Montana and North Dakota. According to other census data, there were in 1930 the following numbers of foreign-born whites in our farm population: German, 215,977, Swedish, 98,589, Norwegian, 91,385; Canadian, 99,737, Russian, 59,667, Polish, 65,106, Czechoslovakian, 58,722; and English, 44,106. The total number of foreign-born whites in the farm population was 1,084,081.<sup>24</sup>

If the more detailed census tables are studied, the percentages for the individual states stand out more sharply, and the various ethnic elements become more differential. We shall present only a few of the extreme cases.

Negroes are a significant element in the farm population only in the southern states, for nowhere do they constitute as high as 1 per cent of the total farm population except in the three southern divisions. They comprise more than one-third of the population in South Carolina, Mississippi, Louisiana, Georgia and Alabama. On the other hand, they constitute less than one per cent in four states—Wisconsin, Minnesota, North Dakota, and Utah. Over 55.4 per cent of the Negroes live in rural areas, and almost 40 per cent (39.4) of these live on farms. They comprise 9.7 per cent of the total population, 15.5 of the farm, 8.5 of the village, and 7.5 of the urban populations of the United States.<sup>25</sup>

The Chinese and Japanese constitute an appreciable proportion

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, Table 38

<sup>24</sup> *Fifteenth Census*, Population, vol. III, part I, p. 21

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, part I, pp. 12, 30, 31

## 74 THE PEOPLE OF THE RURAL UNITED STATES

TABLE 13.—STATES WITH 30 PER CENT OR MORE OF FOREIGN STOCK IN THEIR FARM POPULATION, AND THE DOMINANT ETHNIC GROUPS\*

Division and State	1 Per Cent Foreign-born White	Per Cent of Foreign-born Parent-age	Per Cent of Mixed Parent-age	Total Per Cent of Foreign Stock	Dominant Groups, Foreign-born Whites
New England					
Massachusetts	18 0	23 2	9 1	50 3	Canada, England, Ireland
Rhode Island	10 1	23 0	8 3	41 4	Canada, England
Connecticut	22 3	28 5	7 2	58 0	Germany, Italy
Middle Atlantic					
New Jersey	16 2	19 7	5 7	41 6	Italy, Germany
East North Central					
Michigan	11 7	18 1	11 6	41 4	Canada, Germany
Wisconsin	10 4	22 7	13 8	46 9	Germany, Norway
West North Central					
Minnesota	12 9	25 7	15 3	63 9	Sweden, Norway, Germany
Iowa	5 7	14 0	11 4	31 1	Germany, Norway, Sweden
North Dakota	15 7	31 4	17 6	64 7	Russia, Norway
South Dakota	9 3	20 8	14 7	44 8	Germany, Norway
Nebraska	6 8	17 1	12 4	36 3	Germany, Sweden
Mountain					
Montana	12 7	17 5	12 0	42 2	Norway, Germany, Sweden, Russia
Utah	6 4	11 9	11 8	30 1	England, Denmark
Nevada	16 0	15 2	9 8	41 0	Italy, Germany
Pacific					
Washington	14 6	15 5	10 8	40 9	Canada, Sweden
California	15 0	15 5	8 2	38 7	Italy, Germany

\* *Fifteenth Census*, Population, vol. iii, part 1, pp. 333, 343, 747, 1073, 1187, part ii, pp. 7, 65, 129, 177, 405, 755, 817, 1087, 1209, 1305. For a detailed analysis of foreign-born farmers, see Brunner, E. deS., *Immigrant Farmers and Their Children*, Doubleday, Doran & Company, Inc., New York, 1929, pp. 5, 8, 9, and part ii.

of the farm population only in the Pacific and, to some extent, the Mountain divisions. There are a great many Mexicans in the West South Central division, and a good number of Indians in all except the New England and East South Central divisions.

#### RURAL POPULATION CHANGES AND MIGRATIONS

There are four chief types of rural population changes which are of significance. (1) Movements from farm to farm or from community to community within the same general locality, (2) movements from farms to villages and cities, and *vice versa*, (3) movements from one state to another, or from one section of the country to another, and (4) movements from foreign countries to the farms of this country. The first type, characteristic primarily of tenant groups, will therefore be discussed in Chapter XI, and the third will be treated in Chapter VI. Immigration was the subject of the section immediately preceding and therefore will not receive further attention. Accordingly, only the second type—the shift of population from farms to villages and cities, and *vice versa*—will be discussed at this point.

**Urban and Rural Migration.**—The population ratios of urban and rural dwellers have been constantly changing, at least since 1880, according to the figures in Table 2 of this chapter; other data indicate that this change, inaugurated when trade and commerce became a part of the technique of civilization, has been moving at a constantly accelerating pace since the Industrial Revolution and the consequent rise of modern cities. Throughout the world more people are moving from farms to urban districts than from cities to rural districts.

It is difficult to determine the extent of this drift from the farms, due to the fact that the census lists only the number of actual urban dwellers without indicating whether the increase in the urban population is caused by births, immigration or migration from rural areas. However, Tables 14 and 15 will throw some light on this question.

It is apparent from Table 14 that there was a steady increase in the urban, and a steady decrease in the open-country, populations during the four decades, 1890-1930, the village population remaining fairly constant, and it has been calculated that a similar shift occurred between 1850 and 1880. Thus, during the period 1890-1930, the shift from rural to urban areas (urban including



## 76 THE PEOPLE OF THE RURAL UNITED STATES

TABLE 14.—SHIFT IN URBAN-RURAL POPULATION PERCENTAGE IN THE UNITED STATES, 1890-1930<sup>27</sup>

	Per Cent of Total Population				
	1930	1920	1910	1900	1890
Cities of 2500 or over . . . . .	56.2	51.4	45.8	40.0	35.4
Incorporated places of less than 2500 . . . . .	7.5	8.5	8.9	8.3	7.6
Other rural territory . . . . .	36.4	40.1	45.3	51.7	57.0

only those places with a population of 2500 or more) was at the rate of 5.2 per cent per decade. When the farm population alone is considered, the percentage of this group in the total population is seen to have decreased. The Census Bureau's best estimate of the farm population in 1910 was 32,077,000,<sup>28</sup> the nearest comparable figure for 1920 is 31,614,269, and 30,157,513 for 1930.<sup>29</sup> These figures show a decline in this group of 1,919,487 in two decades, an average of 95,474 per year.

J. M. Gillette has attempted to analyze the data of the census reports of 1900, 1920 and 1930, with the purpose of estimating the number who moved from rural to urban areas in that period. According to his analysis, 3,500,000 people moved from the country to the city between 1900 and 1910, and 5,500,000 between 1910 and 1920.<sup>30</sup> He says: "If we add the amount of incorporation in each case, we find that practically 6,500,000 persons from territory that was rural in 1910 shifted to territory urban in 1920. This represents the population of a city as large as New York, that of more than two cities the size of Chicago, and that of ten cities the size of Boston or San Francisco."<sup>31</sup> The rural exodus continued unabated until 1926, since which time it has slowed down, by 1930 becoming a drift back to the farm, as is shown in Table 15.

C. J. Galpin, in a radio address delivered February 26, 1930, pointed out the slackening of the movement away from the farm

<sup>27</sup> *Fifteenth Census*, vol. i, Population, p. 14.

<sup>28</sup> *Fourteenth Census*, Agriculture, 1920, pp. 891-892.

<sup>29</sup> *Fifteenth Census*, Population Bulletin, Second Series, Table 4.

<sup>30</sup> Gillette, J. M., *Publications, The American Sociological Society*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, vol. xix, p. 141.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 141.

# THE PEOPLE OF THE RURAL UNITED STATES 77

TABLE 15—MOVEMENT TO AND FROM FARMS OF THE UNITED STATES, 1920 TO

Year	To Cities from Farms	To Farms from Cities	Net Movement	
			Farm to Cities	Cities to Farm
1920	896,000	560,000	336,000	
1921	1,323,000	759,000	564,000	
1922	2,252,000	1,115,000	1,137,000	
1923	2,162,000	1,355,000	807,000	
1924	2,068,000	1,581,000	487,000	
1925	2,038,000	1,336,000	702,000	
1926	2,334,000	1,427,000	907,000	
1927	2,162,000	1,705,000	457,000	
1928	2,120,000	1,698,000	422,000	
1929	2,081,000	1,604,000	477,000	
1930	1,723,000	1,740,000		17,000
1931	1,469,000	1,683,000		214,000
1932	1,101,000	1,154,000		453,000

Total net loss in rural population 1920-1932—5,612,000.

as an indication that the economic forces behind it are losing their momentum, and, in the similar slowing down to farms, a gradual stabilization of the social and economic conditions of those who abandoned farming in favor of city life. He then gives the following additional data. During 1929, there were 631,000 births on farms, as against 281,000 deaths—a natural increase of 350,000 people. But this increase, plus those who moved away from cities, was not sufficient to balance the number of those moving to cities, and as a result the farm population was 27,222,000 on January 1, 1930, as against 27,491,000 on January 1, 1929, a decrease of 269,000. However, the estimated excess of births over deaths in 1930 was great enough to increase the farm population by 208,000.

**Areas of Rural Migration.**—The loss in rural population has varied over the geographic sections of this country from decade to decade. Broadly speaking, prior to 1900, New England, the

\* "The Agricultural Situation," Washington, November, 1932, p. 4. See also Whelpton, P. K., "Population in the United States," *American Journal of Sociology*, 1928, vol. xxiv, p. 265.

## 78 THE PEOPLE OF THE RURAL UNITED STATES

Middle Atlantic and the East North Central divisions suffered most heavily in this respect, between 1900 and 1920, the loss was heaviest in the following, in order the West North Central, Pacific, and the three southern divisions, and, from 1920 to 1930, in the West South Central and East South Central, Pacific, Middle Atlantic, South Atlantic, and Pacific divisions. New England's apparent gain results from the new basis of classification used in 1930, and from the suburban trend of urban dwellers. The detailed data are given in Table 16.

TABLE 16 — PERCENTAGE OF POPULATION CLASSIFIED AS RURAL, BY GEOGRAPHIC DIVISIONS, 1880-1930<sup>a</sup>

Division	Per Cent of Population, Rural					
	1930	1920	1910	1900	1890	1880
United States	43.8	48.6	54.2	60.0	64.6	71.4
New England	22.7	20.8	23.7	27.5	33.2	41.9
Middle Atlantic	23.3	25.1	29.0	34.8	42.3	50.1
East North Central	33.6	39.2	47.3	54.8	62.2	72.5
West North Central	58.2	62.3	66.7	71.5	74.2	81.9
South Atlantic	63.9	69.0	74.6	78.6	80.5	84.9
East South Central	71.9	77.6	81.3	85.0	87.3	91.6
West South Central	63.6	71.0	77.7	83.8	84.9	87.5
Mountain	60.6	63.6	64.0	67.7	70.7	76.4
Pacific	33.5	37.6	43.2	53.6	57.5	63.8

The fact that the rural population constitutes a smaller percentage of the total population of a particular state or section does not in most cases mean a literal decrease in that population. The census of 1920 did, however, reveal that the rural population was smaller in three divisions and eighteen states than it was in 1910. Table 17 shows the net loss in rural population in certain sections during this decade.

The most recent data on rural-urban migration are summarized in Table 18. From these figures it can be seen that, although the total loss in farm population caused by migration was relatively small, three divisions showing an actual gain, the loss in the West North Central and West South Central divisions was very

<sup>a</sup> Truesdell, *op cit*, p. 31; *Fifteenth Census*, vol. 1, Population, Table 12.

# THE PEOPLE OF THE RURAL UNITED STATES 79

TABLE 17 —NET LOSS IN RURAL POPULATION IN CERTAIN DIVISIONS AND STATES BETWEEN 1910-1920<sup>44</sup>

Divisions and States	Rural Population		Net Rural Loss	Per Cent Rural Loss
	1910	1920		
New England	1,554,599	1,535,836	19,763	- 1 2
Maine	480,123	468,445	11,678	- 2 4
New Hampshire	175,473	163,322	12,151	- 6 9
Vermont	257,039	242,452	14,587	- 5 7
Massachusetts	241,049	202,108	38,941	-16 2
Rhode Island	17,956	15,217	2,739	-15 3
Middle Atlantic	5,592,519	5,588,549	3,970	- 0 1
New York	1,928,120	1,795,383	132,737	- 6 9
East North Central	8,633,350	8,426,271	207,079	- 2 4
Ohio	2,101,978	2,082,258	19,720	- 0 9
Indiana	1,557,041	1,447,535	109,506	- 7 0
Illinois	2,161,662	2,082,127	79,535	- 3 7
Michigan	1,483,129	1,426,852	56,277	- 3 8
West North Central				
Iowa	1,544,717	1,528,526	16,191	- 1 0
Missouri	1,894,518	1,817,152	77,366	- 4 1
Kansas	1,197,159	1,151,293	45,866	- 3 8
South Atlantic				
Delaware	105,237	102,236	3,001	- 2 9
Maryland	637,154	580,239	56,915	- 8 9
East South Central				
Tennessee	1,743,744	1,726,659	17,085	- 1 0
Mississippi	1,589,803	1,550,497	39,306	- 2 5
Mountain				
Nevada	68,508	62,153	6,355	- 9 3

great, amounting to a gross urban migration of 600,000 and a net farm loss of 124,000

The rural population has shown a decrease in certain sections during other periods than appear in Tables 17 and 18 This was true of the New England division between 1880-1890 and 1890-1900, and of the East North Central division between 1900-1910 Connecticut lost during 1880-1890, and New Jersey, during

<sup>44</sup> Truesdell *op cit*, pp 179-182

Division	From Farms	To Farms	Loss or Gain in Rural Population by Migration
New England	52,000	51,000	- 1,000
Middle Atlantic	95,000	111,000	+ 16,000
East North Central	228,000	236,000	+ 8,000
West North Central	331,000	259,000	- 72,000
South Atlantic	183,000	161,000	- 18,000
East South Central	136,000	145,000	+ 9,000
West South Central	269,000	215,000	- 52,000
Mountain	105,000	85,000	- 20,000
Pacific	144,000	129,000	- 15,000
Totals and Gain of Rural Population by Migrations	1,392,000	1,543,000	+151,000

1890-1900 The states listed in Table 17 suffered such losses during the following periods :

Maine, 1880-1890, 1890-1900  
 New Hampshire, 1880-1890, 1900-1910  
 Vermont, 1880-1890, 1890-1900, 1900-1910  
 Massachusetts, 1880-1890  
 Rhode Island, 1900-1910  
 New York, 1880-1890, 1890-1900, 1900-1910  
 Ohio, 1880-1890, 1890-1900, 1900-1910  
 Indiana, 1900-1910  
 Illinois, 1880-1890, 1890-1900, 1900-1910  
 Missouri, 1900-1910  
 Kansas, 1890-1900  
 Delaware, 1880-1890  
 Maryland, 1880-1890  
 Nevada, 1880-1890

A combined total shows a loss of rural population in 44 states in one or more decades from 1880-1920. Fourteen states showed a decrease in rural population from 1920-1930, and 29 states lost in their farm population during this decade.<sup>28</sup>

**Age Groups Involved in Rural Migration.**—This aspect of rural migration was discussed to some extent in the section on the age composition of the rural and farm populations, and it was

<sup>28</sup> United States Department of Agriculture Release, February 19, 1931.

<sup>29</sup> *Fifteenth Census*, Population Bulletin, Second Series, United States Summary, Table 38.

## THE PEOPLE OF THE RURAL UNITED STATES 81

seen that rural people are attracted to the city in great numbers between the age groups 15-19 and 35-44 years. The village tended to lose people to the city at about the same rate that it gathered them from the farms, and to attract more than its share of people 65 years and over.

The farm and urban populations are as follows.<sup>87</sup>

Age Group	Farm (Per Cent)	Urban (Per Cent)	Urban Excess (Number)
0-14	37 0	23 2	6,925,129
15-29	25 4	26 0	11,133,382
30-44	16 9	35 1	11,375,916

Some of the increase in the urban population is due to immigration, but undoubtedly rural migration is responsible for a great part of it. Dr. Galpin presents a concrete picture of the drift of rural youth to the city, and also reveals something of its significance:

In the total farm population of the country [1920] 25.7 per cent are under ten years of age. Put in concrete form: In a unit of 10,000 city people, 1900 young children would be non-producers; in 10,000 farm people, 2570 would be non-producing children. The farm unit would be carrying a handicap of 670 children, and the city would, theoretically, have 670 more producers. In the 30,000,000 city group there are 2,000,000 fewer children under ten years of age than in 30,000,000 farm people . . . The extra burden of . . . children to rear and educate, with 2,000,000 fewer producers to do it, raises a serious question on the score of how to do it. It is evident that the farm population is pouring this continuous surplus of adolescents, ready reared and ready educated by farm people, into city groups as producers of city wealth.<sup>88</sup>

O. E. Baker presents the issues in an even more startling fashion. He says:

The magnitude of this migration from the farm can be estimated with confidence only for the decade 1920-1930, but it is possible to estimate roughly the net migration from rural territory, which includes both the rural farm and rural non-farm (mostly village) population, since 1890. The net migration from rural to urban territory during the decade 1890-1900 was about 2,500,000; during the next decade, 1900-1910, it was about 3,500,000; and from 1910 to 1920, which included the World War years, it was possibly 5,500,-

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*, Table 20

<sup>88</sup> *Proceedings, Sixth National Country Life Conference*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1923

ooo. During the decade 1920-1930, it was fully 5,000,000. But the net migration from farms during this decade was over 6,000,000, the farm population experiencing a decrease of over 1,000,000 during the decade.

The cost of this contribution of the farming people to the productivity and prosperity of the cities is greater than is commonly recognized. If it costs only \$3000 to rear the average child on American farms to the age of 15, when he may be assumed to be self-supporting—and certainly \$200 a year is not an excessive estimate of the cost of food, clothing, medical services, education and all other expenses—then the 6 million net migration from the farms during the decade 1920-1930 represented a contribution of 18 billion dollars. This is nearly 2 billion dollars a year, which is almost equal to the value of the wheat crop plus that of the cotton crop.

Nor is this all. When the farmer and his wife grow old and die the estate is divided among the children. During the decade 1920-1930 over one-fifth (about 22 per cent) of the farmers and their wives died, and these estates were distributed among the children. About one-third of the children had moved to town, and those children who remained on the farm had to mortgage the farm in many cases in order to pay the brothers and sisters who lived in the cities their share of the estate. This is probably one of the major causes of farm mortgage debt. A rough estimate indicates that between 3 and 4 billion dollars was drained from the farms to the cities and villages during the decade 1920-1930 incident to the settlement of estates. This is an annual drain of 300 to 400 million dollars, which is 3 or 4 times the annual value of the wool clip of the nation.<sup>39</sup>

**Causes of the Urban Drift of Rural Peoples.**—The causative factors in rural migration have not been definitely determined, although a number of specific studies of this phenomenon have been made.<sup>40</sup> However, the following generalizations can be

<sup>39</sup> Address of O. E. Baker, at the meeting of the Association of American Geographers, in Washington, D. C., December 29, 1932. The manuscript was furnished by its author. Dr. Baker warns that some of his estimates were made from preliminary census data.

<sup>40</sup> See Anderson, W. A., and Loomis, C. P., *Migrations of Sons and Daughters of White Farmers in Wake County*, North Carolina State College Agricultural Experiment Station, Raleigh, 1930; Lively, C. E., and Beck, "Movement of Open-Country Population in Ohio," 1928, and also (1930) "Movement of Open-Country Population in Three Townships in North Eastern Ohio" (mimeographed), Ohio Agricultural Experiment Station, Columbus; Smick, A. A., and Yoder, F. R., "A Study of Farm Migrations in Selected Communities in the State of Washington," *Bulletin No. 233*, Washington State College, Agricultural Experiment Station, Pullman, 1929; Gee, W., and Carson, *Rural Depopulation in Certain Tidewater and Piedmont Areas of Virginia*, Institute

made, although they may be subject to modification, and some of them may be subject to question (1) The majority of rural migrants are between the ages of 15 and 30 and females constitute a larger percentage than males do. These young men and women leave the farm because of the advantages offered them in the city in the way of choice of occupation, education, and a livelier social life. (2) Old people leave the farm, usually going to a nearby village or town, because farm life, at least farm work, has become too rigorous for them. (3) Women leave the farm in greater numbers than men because the city offers them greater economic and personal independence, and a greater choice of occupation. (4) Physical disability, other than that due to old age, causes many to leave the farm for the occupations and life of the village or city. (5) Fewer people are now needed to carry on farm production because of the increased use of farm machinery and the increased efficiency in the methods of production. (6) Most fundamental of all, from the economic point of view, is the fact that the increase in specialization and division of labor has withdrawn many economic processes from the farm, and the people have followed these "new" industries to the city. (7) The higher birth rate in rural families tends to create an excess rural population which migrates to the city since new lands are no longer available for its absorption. (8) Although the drift to the city is still present, the rate of acceleration has slowed up since 1929, due probably to the acute unemployment problem in all large cities, and the tendency of large numbers who were formerly urban residents engaged in urban occupations, to move to nearby country areas chiefly because of cheaper living conditions.

In addition to the migrations from farms to cities and *vice versa*, some consideration should be given to some of the marked, but less notable, long-time trends revealed by the President's Research Committee on Social Trends. McKensie shows, in his study of metropolitan communities, that urban centers tend to attract more and more of the total population to their zones of influence. He says, "A considerable proportion of the population included in the arbitrary definition of metropolitan territory would nat-

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of Research in Social Sciences, University of Virginia, Charlottesville, 1929, Young, E. C., "The Movement of Farm Population," *Bulletin* 426, Cornell University Agricultural Experiment Station, Ithaca, 1923, Zimmerman, C. C., "Migrations to Towns and Cities," *American Journal of Sociology*, vol. xxxii, pp. 450-455.



## 84 THE PEOPLE OF THE RURAL UNITED STATES

urally be classified as 'rural' by the Bureau of the Census. But such rural population is more urbanized from an economic and social standpoint than much of the so-called 'urban' population living in small centers remote from larger cities."<sup>41</sup> By taking counties in which there are large cities, he shows that one-half of the nation's total population lived in 189 such counties in 1930, whereas it lived in 312 counties in 1910, and that one-fourth of the total population lived in 27 counties in 1930, whereas it lived in 39 counties in 1910. There are two movements of population into areas adjacent to large urban centers: one from the heart of the cities into suburban areas, the other from the more extensive agricultural hinterlands into the more intensive agricultural penumbras of great cities.

Brunner and Kolb made a detailed study of population factors in sixteen areas, each with a city at its center, comprising 10.2 per cent of the population of the nation. They divided each area into four tiers, the first including the city center, tier two comprising all the counties adjacent to the one in which the city was located, tiers three and four each respectively being one more county removed. They found an increasingly higher ratio of children under ten years of age per woman 20 to 45 years of age as the distance from the cities increased, a similar increase in the birth rate, and a higher ratio of males per 100 females in the outer than the inner tiers.<sup>42</sup> Thus it is apparent that changes in population concentration and all other population trends indicate a steady migration of the rural population toward as well as into city centers.

### SOME SOCIAL IMPLICATIONS OF RURAL POPULATION DATA

It is the character of the rural population, rather than its number, that is important. However, some facts of social significance are found in a consideration of the gross numbers of rural people, and the distribution of the total national population, as well as in the factors of the composition and character of the population.

In 1930, there were 53,820,223 individuals in rural areas, of which 30,157,513 were farm, and 23,662,710 were village, dwellers, 43.8 per cent of the national population was rural, and 24.6 per cent was farm. Such is the distribution of the rural and

<sup>41</sup> Brunner, E. de S., and Kolb, J. H., *Recent Social Trends*, vol. i, chap. ix.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, chap. v.

farm population we find after four centuries of the shifts and changes in population groups and centers incident to the colonization of the United States by white settlers and Negro slaves brought from Africa

From the beginning of our national history until sometime after the very recent disappearance of the frontier, the settlement of the west was motivated chiefly by two outstanding forces: (1) the westward movement of the population, and (2) the acquisition of land. As early as 1676, following King Philip's War, the opportunity of owning land began to lure the settlers from the colonies, and this movement into adjacent lands was to continue steadily, but slowly, for over a hundred years, west into Pennsylvania and south on to the Piedmont Plateau. Some fur traders penetrated even farther into the west, following the Ohio River; and men like Daniel Boone crossed the Appalachian Mountains and settled as far west as Tennessee and Missouri.<sup>48</sup> As early as 1817 one observer stated that "Old America seems to be breaking up and moving westward," and many New England towns saw their population definitely decrease between 1790 and 1820. This continuous westward movement in search of land increased steadily,<sup>49</sup> it saw the settlement of the great central valleys of the Ohio, Mississippi and Missouri Rivers, and the first covered wagons cross to the Pacific Coast, and, by the last half of the nineteenth century it had taken on the aspect of a general migration. The disappearance of the frontier is responsible for the slowing up in the westward movement which became evident as the twentieth century approached.

Entirely different forces were responsible for the shift in population after 1900, agriculture continuing to be the motivating force only in such cases as the opening of Indian reservations in Oklahoma and South Dakota, or the promotion of new irrigation areas. Industrial development has to a great extent transplanted agricultural development and become the dominant force in population shifts. This is borne out by the fact that most of the 2000 counties which showed an increase in population between 1910 and 1920 included in their areas some recent industrial develop-

<sup>48</sup> Turner, F. J., *The Frontier in American History*, Henry Holt and Company, Inc., New York, 1921, pp. 67-125.

<sup>49</sup> Schmidt, L. B., and Ross, E. D., *Readings in the Economic History of American Agriculture*, The Macmillan Company, New York, 1925, chap. viii.

## 86 THE PEOPLE OF THE RURAL UNITED STATES

ment, while most of the 1000 counties which showed a decline during this decade were rural.

The following is a categorical summary of the socially significant conclusions concerning the rural population of the United States.

1. The primary economic and social function of rural society is to produce raw food, clothing and shelter supplies for the entire population. But, in accordance with the law of supply and demand, if the rural population is too small in proportion to the national population, it cannot raise enough raw materials to satisfy the national demand, and as a consequence the prices of raw materials will soar and jeopardize the standard of living of the rest of the population. On the other hand, too great a rural population will result in an overproduction of farm products, lower prices, and a lower rural standard of living.

2 The percentage of the rural population, particularly the farm population, is found to be steadily decreasing when compared with the national population. The steady drift of the rural-born to urban centers, and the relatively small movement from city to farm, result in a steadily diminishing percentage of the national population living in the country, in some states and in many counties the farm population was actually smaller in 1930 than in 1910

3. During the period 1790-1910, the center of population moved almost due west at an average rate of 46 miles per decade. In the decade 1910-1920 this rate dropped sharply to only 9.8 miles, and in the decade 1920-1930, to less than 6 miles. Because the movement of the population is now cityward rather than westward, we may expect the center of population to remain fairly constant (southwestern Indiana in 1930) or to shift slightly eastward.

4. The rural population does not have a normal sex distribution for two reasons: first, the national population as a whole has a greater number of males than females, and, second, women drift to the city in greater numbers than do men.

5 The rural population has a very uneven age distribution. We find an excess of those under 20 years of age in the farm population; the farm and village populations are deficient in the large middle-age group (20-64 years), and there is an excess in the old-age group in the village population.

6 The rural population has a smaller proportion of the foreign-born than does the urban, and of these foreign-born in the rural population, there are more males than females.

7 The economic and social life of the farm is now placed in the position of competing with the economic and social life of the city for its share of the nation's population. This competition does not exist solely between rural and urban communities, for the various rural sections are competing for population among themselves, and both of these forums of competition are present throughout the rest of the world. With this competition and the gradual industrialization of all civilization, a continuous shifting of rural people is inevitable. But this shift is not to be deplored unless it begins to sap the vitality of rural life, and, as will be seen in the chapter on rural health (Chapter XVIII), there is no evidence of this at present in the United States.

8 "In the large cities (those having over 100,000 population) the census revealed in 1920 almost enough children under 5 years of age in relation to women 15 to 44 years of age (child-bearing age) to maintain a stationary population without accessions from outside. In 1930 there was a 20 to 25 per cent deficit of children. In the smaller cities there was a slight surplus of children in 1920 above the number required to maintain a stationary population. In 1930 there was an 8 per cent deficit, on the average. In the rural non-farm, mostly village, population, there was still a surplus of children in 1930 nearly 30 per cent larger than necessary to maintain a stationary population, and in the rural farm population there was a 50 per cent surplus."<sup>45</sup>

#### QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

- 1 Who really constitute the rural population, only those who live on the farm? Those who live on farms and in small towns? Or those who live on farms, plus those who live in towns and cities but who are owners of farms, or retired farmers?
- 2 Discuss the causes of density of rural population per square mile, and the relation of density to community social facts.
- 3 Measured in terms of those who are gainfully employed, where does agriculture rank among occupations? What is the significance of this rank?
- 4 As you look at the data on "Rural Population Per Square Mile," what ideas come to your mind?
- 5 Name everything about the distribution of sexes in the farm population that you can think of which has any significance.
- 6 Rural districts pay for the education of thousands of boys and girls who

<sup>45</sup> Baker, *op cit*

## 88 THE PEOPLE OF THE RURAL UNITED STATES

later render all their economic contributions to city enterprise. Do you think anything should be done about this situation?

- 7 Have foreign-born rural citizens made any outstanding contributions to American rural life?
- 8 Discuss the drift of rural people to town and urban centers, from every angle you can think of

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## CHAPTER V

### LIFE AND LABOR ON THE AMERICAN FARM<sup>1</sup>

#### LIFE ON THE FARM

**Farming as an Enterprise.**—The basis of the selection of an occupation or profession is the immediate or future satisfaction which is to be obtained from its pursuit as expressed in terms of financial return and working and living conditions. Although farmers consciously evaluate their work on these bases probably less than any other class of workers, they do know whether they are living in prosperity or poverty and enjoying their work and leisure and their life on the farm or in the rural community.

As far as financial return is concerned, farming is in a middle position, the return from it is neither great nor, as a rule, very small. There are three reasons for this. The work is generally carried on chiefly by the farmer's family. The farmer's capital is limited in amount and is on the average too small to enable him to accrue a very large net income, the actual returns on it usually being less than four per cent.<sup>2</sup> Finally, the scale of production is not large enough to yield the enormous profits possible in corporate or trust organizations or even huge partnerships—in other words, farming is not "big business." The products of his land, however, generally assure a living for himself and his family, and he usually, though not always, has slightly more money at the end than at the beginning of the year—a fact more universally true of the farmer than of any other group of men who work with their hands. Although he never becomes a millionaire as a tiller of the soil, neither does he, except in extreme cases, become a pauper.

It is not the purpose of this chapter to make a thorough analysis of farming as an economic enterprise, we wish merely to indicate

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<sup>1</sup> The specialized aspects of farm labor, such as child and "gang" labor, are discussed more fully in later chapters in this book.

<sup>2</sup> Black, J. D., *Agricultural Reform in the United States*, McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc., New York, 1929, pp. 26-27.

its position when gauged by monetary standards, and we believe this can best be done by listing categorically the arguments for and against farming as a business enterprise

The arguments in its favor may be stated as follows. (1) The farmer's investment is relatively safe, since financial losses are not of the same magnitude as in the more speculative enterprises (2) He is comparatively free from the influence of the price regime, *i e*, his life does not depend directly on the price he receives for his products as does that of the hired laborer or even the manufacturer, for if necessary he can live from his own garden, fields, flocks and herds (3) Farming is seldom subject to industrial wars, labor upheavals, strikes, lockouts and other phases of industrial strife (4) The farmer enjoys a further economic advantage from the point of view of labor in that his entire family can work as a unit on the farm

On the other hand, there are certain specific disadvantages in farming (1) Greater financial returns are possible from other business enterprises, as for example from manufacturing or transportation, law or medicine, or the other more specialized professions (2) Farming is a more or less seasonal occupation, and the farmer is therefore likely to have little ready cash except at certain seasons of the year (3) His credit facilities are usually poor, since he needs credit over a period of time and banks as a rule do not want to tie up their funds in long-time loans (4) His power to mobilize capital and to control the supply of his products is most limited, and therefore as an individual he stands no chance in world competition

However, even in the face of these disadvantages, we believe the conclusion valid that, although farming offers little opportunity for the accumulation of great fortunes, as a purely economic enterprise it does offer a fairly satisfactory prospect

**Farm Life as a Desirable Mode of Living.**—The very texture and fiber of our personality and character arise from the influence of the conditions, both physical and cultural, under which we work day by day, year in and year out—an influence of which we may be entirely unaware, but which is nevertheless constant and pervading. The things we do each day dictate—in fact, *are*—our modes of life, and the habits thus formed make us what we are. From this it follows that our occupation, more than any other one thing, places us in our social group or class. Traditions

which have become attached to these activities often continue to dictate modes of thinking long after the forms of the activities themselves have changed. Thus the activities of previous generations, especially of the one immediately preceding the present, influence the latter's way of looking at things. The farmer's mode of living and thinking differs not only because of the different circumstances under which he lives, but also even more because of the long occupational history, and consequent wealth of traditions, of his group.

The influences which tend to differentiate the farmer from other occupational groups may be summarized as follows. Farming is carried on under conditions different from those of any other occupation. The farmer's isolation from others, more extreme than in any other occupation, is of the greatest importance, for the fact that he works in solitude the greater part of his life cannot help but make him different from the urban worker who is practically never out of the sight of others. The farmer's family completely overshadows all other social groups in influence, and this likewise registers itself in his personality and thinking. A further factor which is reflected in his temperament and character is the fact that he works in the outdoors—stimulated by fresh air, buffeted by the elements—with growing, blooming and bearing things. However, while this isolation robs him of valuable social and industrial contacts, it is not an unmitigated evil, for it frees him from the complexities, the nervous strain, and the dangerous influences which are typical of congested city areas, it gives him a degree of independence and initiative which would not otherwise be possible, and it makes him his own boss and the undisputed head of his own family. Although this isolation is undoubtedly a weak spot and a detrimental influence in our rural communities, it is, we are convinced, a rapidly passing weakness; and for this reason, and also because it will be treated later from many angles, no more extended discussion is given at this point.

In addition to these constant environmental influences, certain characteristics inherent in his occupation make his life pleasant or unpleasant, as the case may be. Much of his work is hard manual labor which entails fatigue so extreme as to render impossible the full enjoyment of his leisure time and to preclude the thought and organization necessary for a creative interest in his work. On the other hand, the necessary diversification of his work develops



habits of independent judgment and affords opportunity for individual initiative. This variety, plus the fact that he is his own boss—in most cases owning his farm or standing a good chance of doing so—does more to add zest and outlook to his life than any other factor.

The woman suffers even more from the monotony of farm life than does the man. She has to care for members of the family, often with less adequate equipment for her work; her hours are even longer than those of the man, and her work is more routine and less creative. While she may not have to battle with the stern forces of nature, she has to see that her part in the farm routine and organization is carried out, and fit her work into the more important processes of plant and animal production. Her adjustments have to be varied, since they are to human beings and to processes carried on by someone other than herself.

It would be both unfair to the farmer and untrue to fact not to take into consideration the forces and present tendencies in agriculture and rural community life which have shown their power to alter much that has just been described. The modern husbandman is as different from the traditional farmer of two decades ago as the latter was from the backwoodsman who hewed his small farm plot out of the primeval forest. Every step in agricultural progress has brought new methods of procedure and new modes of thought. The farmer of today does not accept his isolation as a matter of course, he seeks to overcome it, for he now has a telephone, a daily paper, an automobile, and country and city neighbors. He does not rely on the moon for guidance in planting his crops, but turns to the agricultural college experiment station, to the agricultural bulletin and farm journal. His tools are no longer the hoe and the shovel and pitchfork, but the tractor, self-binder and hay loader. He no longer need work sixteen hours a day and drag himself to bed too tired to talk or even think, for the improved machinery gives him leisure time. As a result, there has been a change not only in the farming process but in rural society itself, and the farmer consequently has a new mode of life and a new way of thinking.

The entrance of science and machinery into agriculture has two very significant effects upon the life and mental habits of the farmer. In addition to freeing him from the mental paralysis of continuous fatigue, it makes possible an increase in leisure time

which gives him more opportunity for reading, for planning his work and for contacts with other people. Scientific farming is in itself a direct stimulus to thinking, in the new problems created by the more complex farm machinery, for the farmer does not, like the factory worker, merely feed the machine; he operates it, repairs it and experiments with it, and in so doing finds himself dealing not with problems of mere brute force but with manipulation and improvement. This, together with breeding plants and animals in accordance with scientific methods, has resulted in two significant changes: first, it has increased his power to use the forces of nature and thus lessened its buffeting influence on him; and, second, by making clearer the so-called mysteries of nature, it has given him a greater faith in his own judgment than in the power of signs and traditions.

With his increased leisure and his more efficient production have come an opportunity and a desire for more numerous outside contacts. The telephone, the rural free delivery, the daily paper, the automobile, and the radio are available to him, each of these widens his contacts and makes them a more constant and stable part of his habits and his thoughts, bringing into his line of vision the community as a whole, the nation, and the world, which in turn become a part of his thinking, of his planning, and of his life itself. Institutions take on a new significance for him. Good schools, churches and neighborhood centers now have a part in his scheme of existence, for he sees their importance in promoting the technique and the business of farming or in changing his mode of life. His consequent understanding of their usefulness to him and their need of him insures his support, which promises them a future such as their past has never been; and these institutions and agencies in turn, together with the countless others which are coming into existence in this new and larger environment of his, will continue to accelerate the processes and tendencies which are creating the modern farmer and remaking the face of the open country.

### LABOR ON THE FARM

Whether a greater proportion of the national laboring population should be employed on our farms than is at present the case is an economic problem, and a moot one at that; this discussion, however, will be confined largely to the social aspects of the agri-

cultural labor question—the sources and scarcity of the labor supply and, above all, its effect on the life of the farmer, of his family, and of the community as a whole—and it is our belief that a complete understanding of these will contribute much to an understanding of the economic factors.

**Sources of the Farm Labor Supply.**—The labor supply of a farm usually consists of the farmer himself and other members of his family and household—the permanent hired help and transient or seasonal laborers, the professionals—threshing, shelling and shredding gangs, exchange laborers, and neighbors. There are, of course, in addition the work animals and the farm machinery, the number and use of which are of great importance in both the number of laborers employed and the ease with which the work is accomplished. Their significance, however, will be discussed more fully later. Here we are interested only in the farm workers themselves.

If farm labor is understood to exclude all but hired men, it must be recognized at the start that there have been forces steadily at work during the past few decades which have tended to change the nature of this group, and, from one point of view, to deplete it as a satisfactory source of the agricultural labor supply.

There have always been men and women who were content to remain merely "hired help"—spending their lives either working relatively permanently for one or two farmers, or drifting from one farm and one locality to another. However, the sons and daughters of neighboring farmers formerly constituted the chief source of the hired-help supply, for hiring out was for the ambitious boy likely to be the first step toward ultimate independence as a farmer, since it provided a means of rising to the tenant class and thence to eventual farm ownership. It is the scarcity of young people who are willing to follow this old custom, more than anything else, which has given rise at times to the discussion of the depletion of the farm labor supply.

The chief cause of this depletion has been the migration to the city, not only of the floating and transient laborers, but of the farmer's sons and daughters as well. They have been drawn there because the urban wage scale seemed high in comparison with that of the farm; the working hours in its industries are regular and short compared with the long irregular hours on the farm; the city provides amusements and social opportunities for the rela-

tively many leisure hours, and it precludes the isolation inherent in farming, furthermore, the labor organizations in its industries afford a means of insuring better working conditions, for the laborer on the farm has no choice but to quit his job if conditions are unbearable. As a result of this migration, there are fewer young people left on the farm, and it becomes necessary to look to the older and more settled laborers to furnish the chief supply of hired labor for our farms.<sup>3</sup>

This urban migration is not the only reason, however; for the fact that farming is for the most part a seasonal occupation is a further serious difficulty in securing farm labor. During the planting and harvesting seasons the demand for labor is great—even abnormal—while over the rest of the year it is exceedingly light. In many sections hired men are wanted only in these two seasons, and where there is only a one-crop system, even the farmer and his family are idle a great part of the year. If this difficulty is to be solved, a certain mobility of the labor supply must be possible during the rush season. But the laborer who is transient or floating by choice is generally considered inefficient and therefore less desirable. The most efficient is usually the one who is actively interested in his work and who wants to follow it permanently, and also sufficiently interested in home life to want to be with his family—neither of which is possible if he is to assist in supplying the demand for transient or seasonal farm labor.

Today, since there are fewer young people left on the farms, the great majority of the hired laborers are either married and more or less permanent, or else purely transient, and it seems desirable from every point of view to look to these older and more settled laborers to furnish the chief supply of hired men and women for our farms. But if this is to be done, they must be assured fairly permanent employment, and homes must be provided for them by the farmer—homes sufficiently adequate and attractive to make them desirable places in which to settle down. Greater permanency of employment becomes possible if the farmer adopts a multiple-crop system, thus keeping his labor force busy the greater part of the year, or if he permits the laborer to farm a small plot of ground, to raise poultry, or to undertake some

<sup>3</sup> Just at this time (1933) there is a drift of population from cities to farms, but for decades the drift has been cityward and will probably be so again within a decade.

similar enterprise which will bring him an income during those times when he is not working for the farmer

Another phase of the farm labor problem, although one not so widely advertised, is the impossibility of obtaining domestic help, for the "hired girl," except the Negro hired woman, is now practically a relic of the past. It is difficult at present to hire even Negro women for this work, for the only ones available are the wives or daughters of the Negro hired men employed on the farm; and the fact that their menfolk hold fairly remunerative jobs makes these women unwilling to work except in the cotton patch or beet field where their wages are relatively high and where they can be in company with others. The city is again responsible for the deficient supply of hired women for farm work, for the many industries now open to women are in the city. The farm itself is not without some responsibility, however, for the hours of the domestic servant, unless she is employed only for the day, are unbearably long and her work is exceedingly servile.

**Conditions of Labor on the Farm.**—Farm labor is and will for a long time continue to be manual labor. This form of labor is always irksome, especially if the hours are long and the work heavy, as is often the case on the farm. The amount of manual work done on one farm during a year is great, the immensity during a farmer's lifetime is almost incomprehensible. During his working life he probably walks over literally every square inch of his farm, and over parts of it numberless times; in a single season of cultivation and harvest he walks hundreds of miles, in soft dirt day after day. He handles hundreds and even thousands of tons of dirt or other materials on the ends of pitchforks and shovels.<sup>4</sup> His rate of work cannot be stabilized, for weather conditions often demand breakneck speed. In addition to his regular day's work, he may at times have to devote a great part of the night to his livestock.

The woman's work is just as irksome and far more monotonous and uninspiring. Her hours are as a rule longer than the man's, and she comes nearer working seven days a week every week in the year. What she does is repeated over and over. At its worst, her work needs thirteen or fourteen hours each day,

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<sup>4</sup> For a good description of the influence of this factor in the farmer's psychology, see Galpin, C. J., *Rural Life*, The Century Company, New York, 1918, pp. 32-37.

Sunday not excluded—cooking all the meals and washing the dishes, making the beds, sweeping and scrubbing and washing and ironing regularly, taking care of the children, making and mending clothes, canning fruits and vegetables, raising poultry and gathering eggs, preparing the dairy products, often working in the garden or helping with the milking or other chores, and even at times going into the fields. If visitors are invited her work becomes even heavier, and a day off means overtime if she is to catch up with her work. Furthermore, her work is singularly incapable of efficient organization or planning—a factor which contributes just as much to its irksomeness as the immensity of her task and its deadly routine.

This is admittedly an extreme picture—extreme in that these conditions are by no means true of all farm women. However, hundreds of them are trying to handle this great variety of work single-handed, in addition to rearing large families and working regularly in the fields. But even where they have no responsibility for any work outside of the house itself—where work in the fields is not demanded of them—the picture is none too bright, as will be seen from the subsequent discussion of the organization of the rural home.

**Machinery on the Farm.**—The ideal solution of the farm labor problem would be the development of a system of farming whereby the employment of outside labor would be unnecessary, the farmer and his own family alone being sufficient to run the farm—but only in normal working hours for everyone, and without overworking the children or depriving them of education. This would be ideal because it would obviate all the drawbacks to family and community life which are created by the introduction of strangers into these circles, and, furthermore, it would of course decrease the difficulties arising from the scarcity of outside labor in the rush seasons and for domestic service.

The introduction and wider use of machinery and other labor-saving devices offers the only suggestion for the fulfillment of this ideal at our present stage of extensive farming. The advantages of this step are obvious. Field work is already done largely by implements under machine or horse power, thus eliminating the necessity of walking all day over soft and uneven ground. Almost all of these implements are so well equipped with levers and other mechanical devices as to make it no longer necessary for

the farmer to use his own strength and body to operate and control them—he adjusts the machine, guides it, oversees its operation, and drives the team or tractor. In some field crops, actual hand work is practically entirely eliminated. Hay loaders and derricks, shredders, threshers, shellers, binders, tractors and trucks—all run by horse, wind or gasoline power—do the work he once did with his own hands. His work with livestock is lightened by the watering systems and various kinds of feeders now available, and also by the improvements in the construction of barns, sheds and cribs. The introduction of the truck and automobile cuts his time and labor in getting his crops to market to about one-fourth of what it was when horses were the only means.

Farm women have not shared equally in the benefits possible from labor-saving devices, for most of the equipment now available for their work offers merely improvements in the way of doing things, instead of substituting motor for human power. Churns, washing machines, vacuum cleaners, fireless cookers, water systems, and gas and oil stoves are quite common, but there is no valid reason why every one of the farm woman's tasks which can be done with water, wind, or machine power should not be mechanized to the same extent as the farm man's work is.

The immense amount of time and energy saved by the introduction of farm machinery is almost impossible to calculate. Contrast the man with the hoe—or even with an old-fashioned walking plow—with the following description.

With a gang plow and five horses a man can plow from five to seven acres per day, completely turning over the soil, whatever its nature, and thoroughly pulverizing it. Plows are now being introduced, with ten to twenty fourteen-inch plows in a gang, which are propelled by a steam-traction engine and with which two men can plow from forty to sixty acres per day. A 110-horsepower machine plows, sows, and harrows at the same time a strip thirty feet wide, at the rate of three or four miles an hour, turning over the soil at the rate of eighty to one hundred acres a day, or under favorable conditions ten to twelve acres an hour. It thus performs work which ordinarily requires forty to fifty teams and men . . . There is a harrowing machine that reaches 100 feet in width, capable of harrowing 300 acres a day or 30 acres an hour.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>5</sup> Zinthe, C. J., "Machinery in Relation to Farming," *Cyclopædia of American Agriculture*, vol. 1, p. 209.

This description was written in the early days of the mechanization of agriculture, and progress has been greater since this time than in any hundred years previous. For example, the combine, which has probably lessened farm labor more than any other machine, has come into general use in the small-grain-growing sections of the country. The first one was manufactured in Idaho in 1905, but neither it nor the later more improved ones were used extensively until 1922. In 1917 only fourteen combines were being used in Kansas, but this number increased to 20,000 in 1928, and to 25,000 in 1930.<sup>6</sup> In western Canada their use increased from two in 1922 to 7255 in 1929.<sup>7</sup> According to recent studies, the labor consumption per acre in terms of man hours ranges as follows: for 7-foot binder, 3.6 hours; for 12-foot binder, 2.8 hours, for 15-foot combine, 1.65 hours. When the additional labor of threshing is included, the figures are 4.6, 3.8, and 1.75, respectively.

The following quotation summarizes not only the recent developments in the harvesting of wheat, but those for all time: "When wheat was harvested with a sickle and threshed with a flail, from 35 to 50 hours of labor was required for harvesting and threshing an acre with a yield of 15 bushels, the introduction of the cradle saved about 10 hours per acre. At present farmers in the Great Plains use from 4 to 5 hours in harvesting an acre of wheat with a binder and threshing from the shock with a stationary thresher. From 3 to 4 hours is required when the crop is harvested with a header and threshed with a stationary thresher; and an average of three-quarters of an hour is needed when the combined harvester-thresher is used."<sup>8</sup>

In contrast with the hand-production methods of 1830, the modern methods under which the 1922 wheat crop was produced made possible the saving of 2,713,179,166 hours, or the time which 109,393 men would put in, working ten hours a day for 300 days, and still greater improvements in this line have been made since 1922. Of course, as a matter of fact, no such crop as that of 1922 could have been handled in 1830.

This striking illustration of the labor saved by the use of

<sup>6</sup> Matthaei, L. E., "More Mechanization in Farming," *International Labor Review*, Geneva, March, 1931, vol. xxviii, no. 3, pp. 331-341.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>8</sup> *United States Daily*, Washington, D. C., June 12, 1930. Statement based on figures published in *United States Yearbook of Agriculture*, 1930, p. 443.



machinery in the production of one of our big crops is presented because we are so likely to overlook the most feasible solution to the labor supply problem, due to the fact that it is evolutionary rather than revolutionary. Nor has the introduction of labor-saving devices on the farm by any means reached its height, for in 1930 much more farm machinery was bought by our farmers than in 1880. The source of power is being consistently shifted from man to beast, from beast to machine—a shift which, in addition to reducing the time and irksomeness of human labor, is lessening production costs, to the benefit of all who depend on farm products for their livelihood.

**The Social Effects of Machinery on Farm Life.**—The introduction of machinery has not only improved the methods of production and made farming more profitable, but it has made it a more desirable occupation and has revolutionized farm life. Some of the outstanding social effects of the mechanization of agriculture are as follows:

1 The farmer's leisure, and his power to enjoy it, have increased. The use of machinery makes possible a shorter day in the fields and reduces the number of work animals required, with a consequent decrease in the number of chores. The rapidity with which work in the fields can now be done reduces the actual number of man hours necessary for the crop production process. The farmer can enjoy his leisure to the full, since machinery frees him from the demands on his brute strength and his consequent deadly mental and physical fatigue. The farmer is no longer merely a beast of burden, he is now a mechanic.

2 The introduction of machines, especially those, such as threshing and harvesting machines, which require gangs of men for their operation tends to standardize farm processes and working hours, and to decrease the isolation in farm work.

3 The farm woman's work is lightened and made more possible of organization because of the machines and devices now on the market for her work (although these are relatively few), and also because the shorter hours in the field for the men make it possible for her to depend on them for some assistance with her work.

4 The farmer's status and mental outlook have changed. As a machine operator the farmer achieves increased dignity and a higher status than he could ever have attained as a mere "hoe

farmer," for according to the generally accepted social standards, manual labor means menial labor, but machine operation is not classed quite as manual labor. In addition, farm work has become cleaner, for the reduction of farm processes to machine processes has in many cases obviated the necessity of coming into direct physical contact with the soil. Last, but by no means least important, mechanization has added zest and interest to farming. The setting up and operation of a piece of farm machinery challenges the farmer's mental ability and prowess. He will work with a piece of machinery with a creative interest which he lacked under the old system of hand farming.

### LABOR SUPPLY ON THE FARM

The problem of securing an adequate and efficient farm labor supply is more closely connected with the problem of decreasing the irksomeness of farm labor than might at first appear, and with them also is tied up the problem of remuneration for farm work.

Under the increasing use of machinery, the amount of man power needed on the farm is relatively decreasing, and the character of the labor needed is today far different from what it was fifty years ago, because of the altered requirements for efficiency and knowledge. Not only is hired labor difficult to get, but it does not meet these new requirements when it is available. The farm labor problem is similar to all other rural problems, and its solution is to be sought—and possibly found—in the solution of these other problems. This solution must lead toward a farming enterprise which will bring in a better financial return for the efforts of the farmers, and make possible a mode of life which, rather than repelling, will strongly attract future generations to farm life.

Although it may be a far cry to expect agricultural labor to lend itself in any marked degree to urban labor standards in the near future, it is not difficult to measure farm labor conditions against these urban standards.

**No Labor Standards in Farm Work.**—First of all, labor tends to be formally organized in the city; and because these labor organizations are powerful enough to force various issues to a settlement, mills, factories and other urban industries have been compelled to adopt and live up to standards which regulate the

conditions under which their employees shall work. Many of these standards are based on studies of the effect on the laborer, as a human organism, of various conditions of motion, speed and strain, from the point of view not only of fatigue but also of his habitual reactions and even his emotions.

**Agriculture a Seasonal Occupation.**—An occupation is generally understood to mean steady employment at one type of work, and consequently one which is seasonal to any great extent can hardly be considered steady work as far as those who fill its seasonal demands are concerned. As has already been said, farming is to a large extent seasonal. The labor demands vary from those of the best-organized farms in the most favorable locations which keep their labor force busy practically 100 per cent of the year, to those of the poorly organized farms, less favorably located, which furnish barely an hour's labor a day during the winter months. Any section which does not demand at least 15 per cent additional labor during the rush season is exceptionally fortunate, but, on the other hand, in certain districts, such as the vast small-grain areas of the west and northwest, the sugar-beet section of the west, and the cotton, rice and tobacco belts of the south, there are times when the farmer himself has nothing to do. To accomplish this amount of seasonal work demands a great many transient laborers, and to be forced to be transient is to be forced into a labor situation which is unsatisfactory to the worker. In those districts where the farming itself can be combined with other work—where the care of a dairy herd or of pure-bred livestock furnishes work in the winter—the demand for labor can be made fairly stable.

**Irregular Length of the Working Day.**—The consequence of the seasonal labor demand and the irregular length of the working day is that the agricultural laborer can form few established habits of living. During planting and harvesting he may work from twelve to sixteen hours a day, and only a few hours daily during the winter, even during the few months of the rush season his hours may vary greatly because of weather conditions and crop conflicts. The urban worker, on the other hand, can organize his whole personal and social life on a known stable basis as far as his work is concerned, for his working day is generally eight hours, it does not vary from month to month, nor is it subject to climatic conditions.

**Versatility Demanded for Farm Work.**—The old assumption that anyone could be a good farm worker is false in the extreme, but it is still prevalent simply because farmers have to take whomever they can get for seasonal work. It is more difficult to standardize farm work than either its seasons or its hours, for the slack seasons can in a measure be filled with other work, and the working hours can be standardized at a sacrifice. But to afford anything like specialized and standardized tasks for the farm laborer means a farm which is larger and better organized than is generally the case at present, and consequently it takes the laborer hours, days, and even years to learn how to do well all the various things which he must do. Efficient farming demands a longer apprenticeship than any other manual occupation, in addition to the best scientific agricultural education that can be had. Needless to say, no transient laborer can meet these requirements, furthermore, if he had to, he would undoubtedly prefer to move to the city where the machine process is more routine and demands less skill and versatility to master.

**Farm Labor Heavy Work.**—The heavy work and physical strain inherent in agriculture cannot as a rule be standardized, although the introduction of farm machinery has done much to lighten them. Handling crops at harvest time and the heavy sacks and baskets used for feed, lifting dirt and manure, and the demands made on the farmer by the livestock—all these constitute hard physical labor. Other manual occupations, such as teaming, quarrying, mining, and work in steel mills, demand a greater constant expenditure of physical energy than does agriculture, however, this group of laborers constitutes only a small percentage of all those manually employed in non-agricultural pursuits. The great majority of factory hands are machine tenders whose work not only is reduced to routine but is comparatively light physically.

**Agriculture a Solitary Occupation.**—The solitude of the rural dweller has already been mentioned, but that of the actual farm laborer is even greater, for during the major portion of his time he is not in contact even with the others who live on the same farm. Two men per farm is the average number of male laborers in the United States, but these two do not work together constantly as do men employed in urban occupations.

**Individual and Personal Responsibility.**—The farm worker, whether he be owner or hired man, is necessarily to a large degree

his own master in his day-by-day work. The very fact that he is working by himself forces him to make his own decisions on problems that arise during his day's work. Of course this is not true to the same extent of gang workers on a farm, but this group constitutes a marked minority of the agricultural labor force, and even this minority is seldom subjected to an impersonal mechanical routine. The fact that his work is with living things—plants and animals—obviates the possibility of reducing it to the monotony of factory work, for it not only demands continuous adjustments from the farm worker, but it enables him to escape the deadening influence of wholly impersonal occupations.

**Farming a Relatively Safe Occupation.**—Wages and hours are by no means the only issues for which labor organizations and reformers have fought in their attempt to improve labor conditions, for the degree to which an occupation is dangerous, hazardous or unhealthful is as important as either of the above. Farming is not hazardous in comparison with the other major manual occupations. For example, statistics compiled by the Prudential Life Insurance Company of America on compensation for industrial accidents during 1916 show a rate of \$3 per thousand for all those employed in mining and quarrying, \$93, for all those employed in transportation and teaming; \$56, for those in manufacturing and construction; and \$35, for those in agricultural pursuits. Statistics for Massachusetts compiled by this same company for 1914-1917 show that farm labor stands nineteenth on a list showing the losses incurred per \$1000 of earned payrolls, its loss being one-tenth less than that in quarrying and concrete work, and about one-fifth that in masonry and carpentry. Statistics of this same loss for New York State for 1914 put farm labor thirty-second out of thirty-four, the only two industries ranking lower being cotton spinning and printing.<sup>9</sup> Although the introduction of farm machinery has increased the possibility of accidents, a majority of injuries resulting from work with shredders, cutters, and other machines, agriculture is free of the hazards present in other industries—the poisonous gases and dusts, bad ventilation and poor lighting, and the constant speeding-up inherent in the machine process, and in measuring farming by the standards of urban industries, these advantages are not to be overlooked.

<sup>9</sup> From charts furnished by the Prudential Life Insurance Company of New Jersey.

**Labor Organizations without Influence on the Farm Labor Situation.**—Although whole-hearted support of the program of labor organizations is not universal, it cannot be denied that their continued and ardent fight for better wages, shorter hours and more healthful working conditions has been one of the chief forces in establishing the standards which now prevail in most of the great urban industries. But there are no such labor organizations for farm workers, for the farm hand's isolation and his personal relationship with his employer have made impossible, and probably unnecessary, any such labor union movement. But if, from the urban laborer's point of view, the farm laborer loses through the lack of support of a powerful labor organization, this loss is compensated for by the fact that he is free from the demands of a union on its members. He makes his own deal, settles his own troubles direct with his employer, and practically never faces the long period of unemployment following a shut-down, lockout, or strike.

**No Chance for Neighborhood or Community Life for the Farm Hand.**—As has already been said, one of the reasons for the migration from the farm to the city is the social opportunities offered by the latter, and the farm hand is well aware of the lack of such opportunities in farm work. Unlike the city man, he cannot live in a community composed of others whose status and interests are similar to his own. He can enjoy none of the institutions and organizations which have been developed by and for the laboring man in the city. He is thus not only solitary in his work, but his life is necessarily exceedingly barren even in his leisure moments.

All of these conditions constitute an extremely weak point in the farm labor situation, and it is these and similar unsatisfactory conditions which cause the farms to suffer when they are forced to compete with urban industries for an adequate supply of labor.

#### THE SOCIOLOGICAL CONSEQUENCES OF THE FARM LABOR SITUATION

**General Considerations.**—It is inconceivable that an occupation like agriculture can suffer labor standards which are so far below those of other occupations without widespread consequences from a sociological point of view—consequences which are detrimental both to the laborer himself and to the home and the com-

munity in which he lives. This is particularly apparent where there is a large number of transient laborers in a community, or where the hired-man or cropper<sup>10</sup> system is the regular method of farming. The hired men of a certain section which was comprised of large farms under the management of an overseer and operated under this system, were once described to the writer as a "cross between slaves and anarchists." Such a characterization, while undoubtedly extreme, nevertheless indicates the unsatisfactory position of the laborer himself and the undesirability of the presence of such an element in the community.

The following are probably the outstanding conditions inherent in farming which demand, as far as possible, the elimination of others except the members of the operator's family in carrying on the farm enterprise.

**Low Moral Character of the Hired Man.**—The hired man is all too often of low moral character. If he is white and unmarried he is likely to live in the farmer's own home, where he often becomes the boon companion of adolescent farm boys who would without doubt be better off without such associations and many of the habits which result directly from them. In addition, his presence in the household not only disrupts the unity of the family life, but introduces into it an individual who many times tends to lower its whole tenor. If labor gangs are employed during certain seasons, the men may not live in the farmer's home, but the result is the same in that their influence is transferred to the community at large rather than being concentrated in one spot.

**Effects of Transient Laborers on the Community.**—Any great demand for transient or mobile laborers is degrading to both the community and the laborer. A community is more or less of an institution, and if its solidarity or harmony is disrupted periodically by the entrance and withdrawal of a great number of strangers, its settled habits of life and even its spirit suffer as a consequence. It is far better for the population of any community or neighborhood to be basically stable. The transient laborer is more or less a gypsy in the labor world, and is subjected to condi-

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<sup>10</sup> For the benefit of those who are unfamiliar with the term "cropper," it should be explained that a cropper is a farm laborer who receives his remuneration in the form of a share of the crops he grows. Usually the landlord furnishes all the work capital, work stock, and machinery, and the house in which the cropper lives. The cropper is a hired man paid in "kind" rather than in cash.

tions which make it impossible for him to develop his efficiency, judgment and character to any extent. He works in the wheat belt in the summer and fall, in the lumber camps and shipyards during the late fall and winter, and in many cases he spends some time in municipal lodging houses and jails during the year. He too suffers because of the demand that he move on after the rush season is over.

**Effect of the Hired Man's Status on His Family.**—If the hired man has a family, his wife and children generally pay the penalty of his financial and social status, for his income is as a rule so low that they also must work if possible. Such work deprives his children of education, since they often cannot afford to give up the time for school, and also because their school year is often broken because his work takes him to a new community during the school season. The house supplied for him and his family is invariably far below the standard of those in which most of the others in the community live. If there is any great number of such families in the community, the educational, religious, home and community life all suffer, as will be seen later, because of the low standard of living which these families are compelled to maintain.

**The Hired Man and Community Life.**—Farm hired men are seldom an integral part of the institutional life of the community. This is becoming more and more the case as we get farther away from the day when they were the sons of other farm families in the community. Today the hired man is likely to spend his leisure alone or in some nearby village, furthermore, studies of his social status and habits show that marriage makes little difference in his participation in the church, the lodge, or the other social life of the community.

Any tendency to develop a permanent hired-man labor group on the farm indicates the development of a lower class than has ever been seen in American agriculture. It is difficult to look with complacency upon the fact that our farming system is, decade after decade, demanding an increasing number of hired men and croppers. Those sections in which there is a thoroughgoing system of hired-man farming constitute the rural slums of the nation. If these men were successfully, though slowly, rising toward farm ownership, as was formerly the case, their presence would not be of so great concern; but quite the contrary is true in some sections



Generally the sole reason for paying labor in crops rather than in cash is to retain the men throughout the year. These croppers are in no sense tenants, as they are so often called; they have absolutely nothing to say about the organization of the farm work. The owner furnishes the managerial ability and often disregards entirely the fact that these men are croppers, and he can be excused for this because he has a greater knowledge of correct farming methods and the future of the farm at heart. The issue is not one of personal blame, but of a system of farming which does not bid fair to improve social conditions in those rural communities where it is prevalent. Its serious significance lies in the fact that we still think of the hired man as the son of another farmer in the community, who lives in the circle of the farmer's own home, and who will soon be on his way toward ownership. A very small percentage of hired men are now drawn from this source, and very few of them will ever be anything else but hired men.

If American agriculture continues to make necessary a large hired-man class, if all initiative in farm operation has to be denied to hired men, and if the numbers of those who fail to move on up the agricultural ladder continue to increase, it will be folly to close our eyes to the fact that there is here developing a section of the rural population whose lives are—and must continue to be—most unsatisfactory to themselves and most damaging to the future of rural civilization in America.

#### QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. If, as many claim, farming is a poor-paying enterprise, why do millions of people continue to farm?
2. In some sections of the nation, particularly in the south, farm work is mostly hand labor. What are the causes and effects of this?
3. Do you think that woman and child labor on the farm presents a more serious problem than the idleness of urban women and children? Give reasons for your answer.
4. Why is manual labor considered menial labor by some?
5. Why have labor-saving devices been introduced to a greater extent in the actual farm processes than in farm house work?
6. If practically all farm labor were reduced to a hired-man basis, what would be the effect on rural life as a whole?
7. The mechanization of farming may lead to corporation farming. If this should happen, what changes would occur in rural life as a consequence?

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## CHAPTER VI

### LAND AND SOCIETY

#### THE RELATION OF LAND TO CIVILIZATION

**The Universality of Land Problems.**—The natural resources of the world are the raw materials out of which men have built civilization, where there are no natural resources, human communities have not developed. As time has passed, inventions and scientific discoveries have made available for man's use many elements in nature not previously known as natural resources. As the magnitude and complexity of human society have developed, some group of natural resources has taken the stage for the first time and for a period played the leading rôle in the drama of civilization. Although, during the last few centuries, other natural resources than land have often here and there exerted this dominant influence in the development of civilization, land has played a steady part. At one stage of society's evolution, the only products used by man were furnished by the land and furnished in the form in which they were consumed—roots, berries, and the like. Land made possible the later cultivation of plants and the food for domesticated animals. It next yielded minerals—coal and iron, and other materials for making tools and implements and for building railroads and factories. It now furnishes all the raw materials in the world, except those which come directly from the atmosphere or the sea. All the complex industrial processes of society depend upon land, the food, clothing, and shelter supplies of all peoples come from it, it is the ground upon which the people themselves live and move. Because of its deep and lasting significance to life, land has been the cause of some of the greatest conflicts between the nations of the world, and between people within these nations.

Without minimizing the importance of other occupations and professions in modern life, it is safe to say that agriculture, the basis of which is land, is the most fundamental occupation of all

civilization, and that civilization will fail when the land fails. Von Moltke's remark, "The German Empire will collapse without the firing of a shot when German agriculture fails," holds as true for the United States as for any other country. Although it may seem that the discussion of land and land problems belongs to economics rather than to sociology, it is unquestionably true that no treatment of social structure or social problems can be complete without a discussion of land, and this is particularly true in the case of rural sociology.

Land is of particular significance to agriculture because it is the only natural resource which is basic to this enterprise. Agriculture differs from all other occupations because of the great amount of land space it requires—space which skyscrapers and deep basements will not provide. It must use the surface of the earth for this space, furthermore, it must go where land is, and it must work for the most part with what the land offers. Fertility has been accumulating in the earth's crust during countless geological ages, humidity, sunshine and the seasons are dictated by the eternal and relatively fixed forces of nature. What the farmer accomplishes must be done largely under these fixed conditions and within these limits, and the result of his efforts is of tremendous significance to the nation and to civilization.

Over a century ago, the economist Malthus became greatly alarmed by what he considered the inability of the land to continue to supply to a constantly increasing population the raw materials necessary for human existence and well-being. The calamity he predicted, however, has been forestalled up to the present by the discovery of new lands and by man's inventive genius in finding new ways to convert raw materials into usable consumption goods, and thus, plus the control of human migration and of the birth rate in particular, bids fair to make the land suffice for all future time. Therefore, the social problems connected with land are not those of the continuous existence of human life, but rather those connected with the organization, control, settlement and utilization of land. The future organization of our national social structure depends upon the issues involved in these problems more than upon any other one thing.

**Land and Community Social Structure.**—In the past and, to a considerable extent, in the present, the social structures of

some nations have been based entirely upon their land systems, particularly upon the ownership and control of land. The Hebrews, the Greeks and the Romans all found it necessary to adopt customs and to make laws regulating the ownership and use of land. As was seen in Chapter III, land ownership and utilization had much to do not only with rural life in England, but with national life as a whole, the problem of home rule for Ireland was deeply involved with that of land holding. Land issues were probably a contributory cause of the French Revolution. For over a generation Mexico has been trying to stabilize her national existence by working out a system of land control which will satisfy her people and at the same time develop an agricultural middle class.<sup>1</sup> Since the World War, European countries have attacked the problem of reconstructing their national social organization on the basis of a redistribution of the control of land. The present condition of Russia is the result of a land system which created the Russian aristocracy. The status of the Italian landowner, the German Junker, the English land baron or lord, and the owner of the South American *hacienda* is a national problem that has grown out of the tendency of certain classes to monopolize the ownership and control of agricultural lands. As a matter of fact, a history of civilization could be written, with considerable success, from the standpoint of the control and utilization of land.

American civilization has by no means escaped the tendency of land—of its control and use—to dictate its national life and social structure to a great extent. The European countries whose people settled in America made a definite and natural attempt to perpetuate the elements of the feudal system of land control in this country, but they were unsuccessful because great areas of fertile land were available, because the type of person who braved the dangers of settling a new continent was not disposed to subject himself to such control, and because the distance of the colonies made it impossible for the mother countries to collect quit rents and to compete successfully with the colonial governments in organizing and administering colonial affairs.

Conscious attempts at dictating the control and use of land are not, however, an index to the peculiar influence of land on social

<sup>1</sup> McBride, G., *The Land Systems of Mexico*, American Geological Society Research Series No. 12, New York, 1913.

structure in this country. Various types of land exercise an unconscious influence on rural social structures, as is apparent when the sparsely settled areas of Montana, Wyoming, New Mexico or Arizona are compared with the closely settled agricultural sections of New England or even with the farming sections of the middle west. The physical characteristics of the land largely determine its use; the use dictates the number of people that can inhabit a given area, and the population density in turn dictates to a considerable extent the type of community life. A nation's industrialization depends upon its natural resources, and the degree of its industrialization depends upon the growth of urban centers. These centers in turn introduce economic and social elements into the social complex which modify the influence of the purely physical use of the land. Every agricultural community in America is influenced by the physical characteristics of the land, on the one hand, and by market contacts, on the other. The products of a farm community—whether cotton, wheat, dairy products, fruit, or vegetables—enter unconsciously into its community structure. The type of land and its control and utilization always play a part in the settlement and life of its people.

The size of farms largely determines the density of the population and thus, to some extent, influences the choice of the type of community life. For example, the population of a dry-farming or range area is so sparse as to make the establishment of schools and churches almost impossible; whereas in agricultural areas which are adjacent to great urban centers, the farms are small enough and the population is therefore sufficiently dense to enable these farmers to approach an urban type of social life. In 1930 the farms in New Mexico averaged 981.4 acres in size, in Malden, a town (township) in Middlesex County, Massachusetts, they averaged only 2.5 acres, in the Connecticut Valley, where there are more than 200 people to the square mile, the average size is only 20.0 acres. The size of the farm does not, of course, always indicate the density of population, for a number of hired men and their families may live on a piece of land which its owner calls a farm and thus the number of families may exceed the number of farms. On the whole, however, the density of the rural population varies inversely with the size of the farm.

Table 19 shows the size of farms in the various geographic

TABLE 19.—AVERAGE ACREAGE IN FARMS IN THE UNITED STATES PER GEOGRAPHIC AREA<sup>a</sup>

Division	1930	1920	1910	1890	1870	1850
United States	156 9	148 2	138 0	137 0	153	203
New England	114 3	108 5	104 4	95 0	104	113
Middle Atlantic	98 0	95 4	92 2			
East North Central	114 7	108 5	105 0	133 0	124	143
West North Central	238 6	234 3	209 6			
South Atlantic	81 6	84 4	93 3	134 0	241	376
East South Central	68 5	75 0	78 2			
West South Central	166 7	174 1	179 3	144 0	194	291
Mountain	652 5	480 7	324 5			
Pacific	230 7	239 8	270 3	324 0	336	695

sections of this country, and also the tendency toward increase or decrease. The physical nature and the location of the land forming these farms are largely responsible for the variations shown in the table. The data give an indication of the population density in these sections, they indicate the influence both of the type of land and its resources, and of urban centers, and the tendencies in the reorganization of farm units in these areas, they also suggest the processes which are working to change the social structures of the rural communities in these sections. For example, the process of breaking up the old southern plantations into smaller units has been going on throughout the entire south, dozens of formerly large-unit ranches in Texas and New Mexico have come under cultivation and been reduced to smaller units. Furthermore, the south, and the south east in particular, have in recent years recognized their favorable situation for growing fruits and vegetables, and consequently in certain sections hundreds of small holdings have developed which are operated under intensive farming methods. In the Mountain division, on the other hand, with the exception of the irrigated sections, the tendency has been to expand production by increasing the acreage, for these sections are best adapted to small-grain crops and farming must therefore be extensive in order to be profitable and to make possible the advantageous use of farm machinery. Furthermore, a number of farms have been newly incorporated in the dry-farming sec-

<sup>a</sup> *Fifteenth Census, Agriculture*, vol. i, p. 8.

tions; in nearly every case these farms are larger, and thus the average size of farms has been raised automatically.

New England and the Middle Atlantic states are between these two extremes of increase and decrease. New England farms were already small in 1850, and since that time forces have been operating in both directions. For example, the abandonment of farms tends to raise the average size, because such farms are usually absorbed by larger units. On the other hand, the nearby great and growing cities offer a good market for the products of intensive farming, and this has tended to decrease slowly the average size. In the great central states, the type of farming is, and will probably continue to be, extensive. However, the average size of farms in these sections decreased steadily from 1850 to 1920 because of the tendency to more and better cultivation and the great amount of capital necessary to own a farm in these states. From 1920 to 1930 it increased, because the large outlay of capital required and the introduction of power field machinery have tended to larger, consolidated holdings.

As we look to the future and attempt to be guided in our conclusions by the history of the past and an understanding of present conditions, the belief seems justified that in the long run our farms will continue to decrease in size, although they may fluctuate from decade to decade, and even increase during a period of rapid mechanization. This decrease can be expected because (1) the increase in our urban and national populations will necessitate more and more intensive farming, (2) the increase in our farm population will tend to force the division of large holdings, and (3) according to farm management and rural social surveys, the family-sized farm is apparently the best producing unit, particularly when measured in terms of the farm family's standard of living. None of these factors is conclusive, but, when coupled with the general tendency in this country during the past eighty years, with the fact that this same tendency has been the rule in other countries, and with the relative decrease in small-grain farming and the relative increase in corn and livestock, dairy, fruit and vegetable farming, they warrant this conclusion. This decrease will result in a denser rural population, and will thus enliven all social processes and create more complex community structures with their resulting social problems. It is, of course, not safe to predict too definitely on things of this kind,



especially when such processes as the mechanization of agriculture and corporation farming are increasing.<sup>8</sup>

**The Peculiar Influence of Land in the United States.**—From the beginning of our national life until the almost immediate present, land opportunities have existed which were never before known in any modern civilization, and this fact has created in the United States a type of civilization that has never existed before anywhere in the world, and will probably not be duplicated, except possibly in South America and Canada. Land was practically free, some of it was extremely fertile, and it was sufficiently plentiful to make individual ownership almost universally possible. The results were that individual ownership became the rule for the first time in history; a system of individual and isolated farm residences was established on a wide scale, likewise for the first time, and the appreciation of the value of land in comparison to that of labor and industrial capital was almost completely destroyed. The belief in the inherent worth of the individual as a vague measure of a man was replaced by the belief in his ability to control land as the measure. Some of the colonies made land ownership a suffrage qualification and, for some time after it ceased to be a qualification for voting, it continued to be a requisite for eligibility for holding office. The reaction to the attempt to establish a semi-feudal system of land tenure swung so far toward the opposite pole that the attitudes of some of our American forefathers would in modern terminology be called "bolshevistic." The emphasis on liberty far exceeded that on either equality or fraternity. America's contribution of a new concept of democracy and her attitude in world affairs at the present time are to no small extent the results of two centuries of unusual land opportunities.

The influence of free virgin land, awaiting and inviting settlement, was felt even beyond its effect on our individual, social and political attitudes, for its traditions wove themselves into our people's economic ideas, attitudes, and convictions. During the decade from 1850 to 1860, nearly 43,000,000 acres of land were taken up in the middle west, and there was a population

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<sup>8</sup> For discussions of large farms and large-scale farming, and the tendencies toward them, see *Recent Economic Changes*, National Bureau of Economic Research, and Laidler, H. W., *Concentration of Control in American Industry*, Thomas Y. Crowell Company, New York, 1931.

increase of over 3,350,000 people, or more than 167 per cent, in the eight middle-western states of Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Michigan, Wisconsin, Minnesota, Iowa, and Missouri.<sup>4</sup> The population increase in Minnesota alone was 2730 per cent, and in Iowa, 251 per cent. An Iowa City editor estimated that during one three-month period in 1854, over 50,000 people entered Iowa. As population increased and the possibility of the exhaustion of this free land became apparent, speculation in land became rife. For example, in western Iowa, land which was homesteaded in the 'sixties and early 'seventies was selling for \$25 an acre by the 'eighties, and for as high as \$100 an acre at the beginning of the present century. Some Iowa and Illinois land sold for \$400 and \$500 an acre during the World War, and men had so completely lost their sense of relative values or had created such false standards of value that they declared that "these were not inflated values, that Iowa and Illinois land was selling for the first time at its real value." So certain have men been of the persistent and continuous future rise in land values that they have bought land on a speculative basis or on its potential value which, even with maximum economic production, could not, in the normal course of events, be reached for twenty years. This has, for the last forty years, put farm lands further and further out of the reach of those who had to rely, for their payments on their farms, on the present productive capacity of the land. The results have been an increasing number of families on the land who do not and cannot own it, and a sacrifice of the rural family's standard of living either because the farmer is trying to pay for an over-capitalized farm, or because the landlord is collecting a high enough rent to pay decent interest on the capital he invested in land which is not worth what he paid for it or thought it would be worth.

The movement westward became a psychological movement which continued long after it ceased to be profitable to take up unsettled lands. Population continued to flow into these sections for the first fifteen years of the present century, solely because of the land opportunities of the last half of the nineteenth century. Those seeking the opportunities offered in Iowa and Illinois in

<sup>4</sup>For a more detailed discussion, see Turner, F. J., *The Rise of the New West*, vol. xiv of *The American Nation Series*, Harper & Brothers, New York, 1906, pp. 74-83.

one generation, in the next generation pushed beyond the extensive margin of profitable production areas into semi-arid or arid land, and the federal government participated in this uneconomic movement by its irrigation projects for the development of this land. As a result, this continued western movement increased land speculation, established homes on land that could not support them, and left undeveloped areas farther east which offered better opportunities than were possible on the remaining marginal or submarginal land of the west. All these conditions are the result of the peculiar land situation which prevailed in the United States during 150 to 200 years. We are now confronted with the economic and social adjustments necessary for reorganizing our social structure and social life on the basis of the land resources which are within the newly populated areas of the nation, and some of these possible adjustments will be discussed in the concluding section of this chapter.

#### THE ADVENT OF OUR LAND PROBLEMS

**The Disposal of Free Lands.**—In their fundamental nature, this country's land problems are in no way different from any other nation's, although we are just beginning to regard them as clearly defined national problems. These various land problems could hardly be expected to arise as long as the United States was in the pioneer stage of agriculture. However, when there was no longer free land and we were compelled to face the task of building our future agricultural progress largely upon the areas already under cultivation, we realized the existence of land problems and the need for state and national land policies. Previous to that period in our national life, farming had been looked upon as a purely individual enterprise, so rich in return and so fraught with future possibilities that it automatically took care of our national welfare. The passing of our extensive frontier has brought us face to face with the necessity of conserving and utilizing our raw materials so as to provide most efficiently for an ever increasing population. Farming is no longer merely the occupation of a few isolated men; it has become the nation's business.

The problem is not merely that a few thousand men who want to avail themselves of farms under the Homestead Acts cannot do so—or at least no longer find it profitable—but that the entire

country is becoming increasingly conscious of the fact that agriculture's per capita production for the nation as a whole is steadily diminishing, and that this means a steady advance in the cost of living, particularly in food, clothing, and shelter which depend directly upon agriculture, furthermore, as far as the average individual can see, there is to be no end to this process. In 1860, there were about 13 acres of farm land per individual in the national population; by 1930 this had decreased to about 8 acres. The per capita acreage of improved farm land decreased from 5.6 in 1890 to 4.8 in 1920, and the per capita acreage of crop land for nine principal crops has declined from 3.5 in 1900 to 2.5 in 1930.<sup>5</sup> It is estimated by some of the best students of population trends that by 1950 our national population will be over 150,000,000, and if this estimate is correct, it is readily apparent that the per capita acreage of the principal crop land will not be over 2.0.

Attitudes which developed when a large proportion of our population was on the land and when there was seemingly an unlimited supply of free lands, and the fact that about 50 per cent of the land is still unimproved, have led to the cry of "Back to the farm!" even though it is apparent that these conditions no longer exist—a slogan urging men to return to, or to enter, an occupation which no longer furnishes an attractive economic opportunity. We have gradually begun to realize that agriculture, which has had such a tremendous hold upon the American pioneer, is no longer an occupation of either great prosperity or pride. Land owners and operators have never anywhere enjoyed greater prestige than was theirs during the first century of our national life, industrial occupations in this country had not been successful in drawing wage workers from the farms, as they had in England from the very beginning of the Industrial Revolution. But by 1900, 35 per cent of our farm entrepreneurs were renters, and the prospect of ownership was diminishing each year. Until the twentieth century, the land problem was thought of only in terms of purchase, homesteads, estates, and inheritances—as concerns only of the individual farmers; but since then it has been regarded as of importance to national economy and social wel-

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<sup>5</sup> *Yearbook of the Department of Agriculture, 1923*, pp. 433-434; and Census Release, July 23, 1931.

fare. As in the case of other economic and social problems, we became conscious of it only when it called for adjustments which were difficult to make. In 1900 we were no more dependent on land as the basis of the production of our primary wealth, than we had been in 1800. Our public domain was so vast that we had not believed its limits could be reached so quickly—Andrew Jackson had said in 1832 that our free lands would suffice for our national expansion for 700 years.

No era in American history has been more interesting and more tragic than that of the westward movement of our pioneers. At the dissolution of colonial government, the original colonies turned over to the federal government all lands west of the Allegheny Mountains, and the census of 1790 showed that practically all the rural population was east of these mountains. By 1820, the frontier, particularly in the north, had moved west almost to the Mississippi River, by 1850 it had gone beyond Michigan, Wisconsin, Iowa, Missouri, Arkansas, and eastern Texas; by 1880, the central portion of the frontier boundary had gone as far west as Denver, and many sections, even on the Pacific coast, had been settled, and by 1900, we became conscious of the fact that the limits of the frontier were quickly being approached.

If our government had consciously and with skillful planning tried to create serious land problems for itself as quickly as possible, it could have found no better and quicker means than its disposal of the public domain by such reckless, short-sighted means. Over 75 per cent of the nation's total land area was at one time in the hands of the federal government. It disposed of 53.3 per cent of these lands by sales to private individuals, grants to railroads and other corporations and to various states, homesteads, and by allotments to the Indians. In 1920 it still retained 22.5 per cent of the original public domain, 10.8 per cent of which was in national forests, national parks, reservations, and unallotted Indian lands, and 11.7 per cent of which was unreserved and unappropriated, 35.6 per cent of the latter being classified as barren and entirely unfit for either range or farm land.<sup>6</sup>

We have, in a little over a century, practically exhausted our

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<sup>6</sup> Mackaye, B., *Employment and Natural Resources*, United States Department of Labor, Government Printing Office, Washington, D. C., 1919.

free lands. Between 1800 and 1918, the federal government turned over to individuals, corporations, and states considerably over one billion acres of farm, range, and forest land. At no time and in no federal act was there any indication of an appreciation of our inevitable economic land problems. Not until we had disposed of 348,000,000 acres, or about 18 per cent of the public domain, did we even make an attempt to establish homes upon the land. Previous to the Homestead Act of 1862, the predominant idea in disposing of public lands was to secure revenue for the federal government, and even the Homestead Acts did not obviate speculation in land after the farms were once "proved" or became the private property of those who "took out the claims." The result is that millions of acres of land, at one time virgin soil owned by the government and sold to private individuals, were robbed of their fertility and are now being farmed by men who do not own them, many of whom have little prospect of ever becoming owners. The public domain was thus exhausted in less than one-seventh of the time Jackson had predicted, and the government, by its failure to develop small land-owning farmers, created for itself the problems of land reclamation and land tenancy.

Some appreciation of what was occurring did find expression from time to time in farmer and labor groups. In 1824 Senator Benton of Missouri introduced a "Land Graduation Bill," which recognized the propriety of granting free lands to actual settlers.<sup>7</sup> The three cardinal principles of his land reforms, for which he fought in and out of Congress for thirty years, were, (1) land limitation, (2) the inalienability of land, and (3) the reservation of land for actual settlers only. In 1847, Garrison expressed the conviction that the redemption of land was necessary to prevent monopoly. Various labor groups made the land question a leading subject for discussion in their conventions from 1845 on, the Free Soil party made land disposal an issue in 1852, and the Republican party discussed it in its convention in 1856. Between 1852 and 1862 numerous bills were introduced in Congress and, finally, in 1862, President Lincoln signed the first Homestead Act. This Act, and all subsequent land acts, have failed to deal with the question in the fundamental way advocated by Senator Benton and his followers, and to prevent the growth of land

<sup>7</sup> Report of Eighteenth Congress, First Session, vol. 1, p. 583.

monopoly and of an extensive tenant class, and the steady exhaustion of soil fertility.<sup>8</sup>

**Our Present Land Situation.**—In 1930, there were in the United States 6,288,648 farms covering 986,771,016 acres of the total land area of this country, 1,903,215,140 acres, thus the area incorporated in farms constituted only 55 per cent of the total land area. Of the land in farms, only 481,110,288 acres, or 49.6 per cent, were under the plow, idle and fallow, or in plowable pastures, in other words, only 27.5 per cent of the total land area was in plowable lands. Only 359,242,091 acres, or 18.0 per cent of the total land area, were in harvested crops in that year. Experts of the United States Department of Agriculture estimated in 1920 that at that time the area of improved farm land could be increased by about 300,000,000 acres, or 60 per cent, by irrigation, drainage, clearing and dry-farming methods, and that there were about 355,000,000 additional acres with sufficient humidity to make crop production possible, but that they were too hilly or sterile to be profitable for anything but timber culture. This means that we have over 655,000,000 acres of potential agricultural land, or 150,000,000 acres more than the total present acreage of improved farm lands. This area, plus that already in use, sets the stage for the future settlement, organization and development of agricultural communities. Most students of land economics are convinced that any encouragement of the development of these lands for crop production would be unwise at this time, but the continued encroachment of the population upon them is going to develop them in one way or another. The question which constitutes the social problems related to them is what sort of communities will develop in these areas, and what the effect of their development will be upon the national social life when they are settled.

The census of 1890 showed 140,970,547 acres lying west of the western boundary of Iowa not included in farms, which are being farmed today (This does not include the expansion in Texas, for this is impossible to calculate because the farms in that state were differently classified in the census reports of 1890 and 1930.) Between 1890 and 1930, the rural population in the

<sup>8</sup> Magnusson, L., *Disposition of Public Land of the United States*, Bulletin of the Department of Labor, Government Printing Office, Washington, D. C., 1919.

states west of the Iowa line increased 15,788,853, or 285 per cent. The rapidity with which this vacant land was taken up is shown in Table 20.

TABLE 20—INCREASE IN POPULATION IN STATES WHICH STILL  
HAD FREE LAND IN 1890<sup>a</sup>

State	1930	1890
California	5,677,250	1,213,398
Colorado	1,035,791	413,249
Idaho	445,033	88,548
Kansas	1,880,999	1,428,108
Montana	537,606	142,924
Nebraska	1,377,963	1,062,696
Nevada	91,058	47,355
New Mexico	423,317	160,282
North Dakota	680,845	190,983
Oklahoma	2,396,040	255,657
Oregon	953,786	317,704
South Dakota	692,849	348,600
Texas	5,824,715	2,235,527
Utah	517,847	210,779
Washington	1,563,396	357,232
Wyoming	225,565	62,555
Total	24,324,060	8,535,597
Increase, 1930 over 1890		15,788,853
Per cent increase		285

The population of the United States increased 64.3 per cent in the period between 1900 and 1930, and the amount of land in farms increased only 16.7 per cent. The problem of getting productive land for our increasing population is becoming more and more difficult, for there is no doubt that land seekers will continue to take up vacant land.

It is estimated that we have already exhausted certain chemical elements in the soil which were millions of years in forming, some of which can never be replaced.<sup>10</sup> We have unquestionably reached a stage in our national life when we must call a halt to this type of farming. We need to bring into cultivation the millions of acres which are uncultivated at present because they are too dry, too wet, too stony, too acid, or too alkaline. It is time to stop the squandering of our public domain; we need to increase our per capita production and to educate our farmers in methods

<sup>a</sup> *Fifteenth Census*, vol. 1, Population, Table 5.

<sup>10</sup> Van Hise, C. R., "Preservation of Phosphates and Conservation of the Soil," *Annals*, vol. xxxiii, pp. 699 *et seq.*



of farming which will prevent soil depletion and, if possible, improve the soil from year to year.

The country has not yet recognized certain bad social conditions as problems demanding a conservation policy. Some systems of taxation make it more profitable to hold land out of cultivation than to farm it, other acres are not under cultivation at present because their owners are holding them for speculation. In the near future these problems also will be attacked, for when the country once sees clearly that they are fundamental to any future prosperity, it will assume the task of finding a way to bring these uncultivated areas under crop, pasture or timber cultivation.

### THE NEED FOR NATIONAL AND STATE LAND POLICIES

**The Objects of a National Land Policy.**—Our national consciousness and national conscience have been developed to a point where it is clear that the disposition of our national resources is vital to our national welfare. It is only recently that any steps have been taken to control the exploitation of land, and then only when other natural resources, such as oils and minerals, were involved. Soil is our greatest natural resource, but no national program has as yet been undertaken to force its conservation. Although the federal government has recently classified the public domain according to its fitness for various uses, this was done only after a vast part of it had been disposed of, and it does not include privately owned lands acquired previously. A wise national land policy would be based upon an increase in our national population of at least fifty million within the next two generations, it would classify all of the nation's land, and it would provide for information and assistance to be given in the proper methods of conservation and reclamation and in establishing good community life in the areas still to be settled.

As a result of the government's failure to base the disposal of the public domain on a classification of the land according to its potential uses and values, practically all our coal, iron, and other mineral and oil deposits have been turned over to individuals. The government, by broad homestead laws and, later, by a miscalculated reclamation program, has led families to settle on land which, for the present at least, should not be under cultivation—a thing which was inevitable without such a classification. To the land hungry, "land is land," especially to those with the memory

of the gains from speculation in the really fertile farming land of the middle west still fresh in their minds. But there are physical, economic, and social limitations to land. The physical limitations are set by the climate, humidity, topography, and fertility of the soil, the economic limitations are set by these physical characters, plus the distance to a market or the difficulties in sending to it the type and kind of product which can be produced, the social limitations are set by the healthfulness of the climate and the capacity of the land to support enough people to make community life possible.<sup>11</sup> All of these facts should be known about the land which is still to be settled, and no agency except the federal government is in a position to collect and distribute this information

Practically all the present unsettled areas need some kind of reclamation. The federal government has already embarked upon this enterprise and has thus far spent millions of dollars to bring lands under cultivation. However, some of this work has not taken into consideration all the limitations just mentioned, and undoubtedly this mistake will ultimately have to be paid for by the loss of some of the money expended.

A reclamation project is always a large-scale irrigation or drainage project and can be successfully undertaken only by a large corporation, a state government, or the federal government. The individual settler cannot undertake it because of the lack of capital, moreover, to carry out the project, the physical facilities necessary for both drainage and irrigation have to cover a large area which includes many individual farms. The federal government can best undertake this work, and in doing so it should have in mind a long-time development program in order to obviate many of the mistakes made in the earlier settlement of our "free lands."

The Reclamation Service stated, at the beginning of its work thirty years ago, that its primary object was to establish homes upon the land, but the homes it did establish—sometimes on submarginal land—can hardly be said to be an index to social statesmanship. It must go farther and guarantee, as nearly as possible, an adequate community life to those who settle upon

<sup>11</sup> Ely, R. T., and Morehouse, E., *Elements of Land Economics*, The Macmillan Company, New York, 1924, pp. 26-31, 49-55.

the land. Its policy and approved blueprints for the sale, development, and settlement of lands should be so well known that no real estate promoter can lead settlers to embark on farming projects which cannot succeed because of their lack of knowledge about physical or economic factors. It should go much farther and see that the settlements in these areas do not become rural slums but, rather, well-rounded rural communities. The feasibility of this last suggestion has been demonstrated by several nations, the State of California, and by a few private colonizers.

**The Object of State Land Policies.**—Many elements in a land policy can be administered better by the several states than by the federal government, for the state governments are closer to the lands and in many ways much more immediately interested in their development. Undeveloped areas lie idle, yielding the state no tax revenues, and often handicapping not only the development of good community life in that area, but also the economic and social life of adjacent or more remote areas. The various states in which there is still unsettled land should cooperate with the national government in land classification, they should probably do even more in giving settlers economic assistance, and they should certainly go farther in helping to establish rural communities. Each state naturally is interested in emphasizing the comparative advantages of its own land, but it should see that no misrepresentation is made of the economic prospects in its undeveloped sections, for such practices invariably react unfavorably on the long-time possibilities of the development it is seeking to promote. The land within most of our states still holds great possibilities for wealth and good community development, and the state government is best fitted to promote both of these.

**Examples of State and National Policies.**—The United States, as well as the individual states, has been slow to develop land policies. California, however, has taken the lead, and has even gone as far as the close supervision of community settlements. She borrowed her plan of land development and settlement from Australia, where it had been successful up to that time; Australia had previously followed the example of Italy and Denmark.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>12</sup> Mead, E., *Helping Men Own Farms*, The Macmillan Company, New York, 1920, chaps. 1, viii-xii.

In 1917, after an extended study by a legislative commission, the legislature of California enacted a law providing for direct land settlement by the state, and it is the first and only state thus far to attempt this. California, however, did not intend that all of her vacant land should be settled with state aid; her purpose was to demonstrate the principles and methods essential to successful settlement. The law was specifically enacted, first, to avoid the financial failure of reclamation caused in large measure by delay in the settlement and use of the land, much of which had to be reclaimed by irrigation; second, to avoid the failure of settlements because of delay both in securing settlers and in getting the land into use, the latter due to the lack of capital and the short-term credits that swamped the settlers before they could get their land under production; third, to avoid placing men on the land who would be unlikely to succeed because of their lack of capital, experience, or adaptability to farming. To insure success, it was determined that, before the state purchased any land for settlement, all the factors affecting health and production should be carefully studied; that the amount of land should be sufficient to make possible a distinct community life in each settlement undertaken; that the title to the land sold to settlers should be retained by the state for ten years; that the settlers' tenure should prevent speculation and yet safeguard ownership, that every settler should have enough capital to protect the state against loss; that the price the settler paid for the land should be fixed by its potential production, that the land should be so prepared as to enable the settler to obtain an income as quickly as possible, that provision should be made by the state for meeting all overhead expenses through the sales made, that settlers should be provided with suitable credit, and be given advice, assistance, and instruction in their farming operations, including marketing, and in cooperating in other activities in the community.

A number of European governments, some of the Canadian provinces, and some of the states in this country formulated plans for assisting returning soldiers to land ownership at the end of the World War. Franklin K. Lane, our former Secretary of the Interior, worked vigorously to enlist federal aid for this. A number of bills were presented to Congress, but none of them made sufficient provision to guarantee economic success or to make

possible the full development of community life. Canada, however, has settled somewhat more than 27,000 veterans upon farms<sup>13</sup>

Practically all the states in this country within the area of irrigation have enacted laws which provide some kind of assistance in the development of their lands, Utah taking the first step in 1865. For irrigation projects, most state laws at present provide for the investigation of everything relating to the water supply, of the soil in relation to its need for water, of the reasonable market value of the land, and of the type of bonds to be issued by the irrigation district. Oregon goes so far as to certify such bonds as legal investments for trust funds and also pays the interest on them for from one to five years. Alberta, Canada, guarantees both principal and interest on its irrigation district bonds<sup>14</sup>

Between 1910 and 1920, by clearing, draining and settlement, nearly 3,500,000 acres in the Great Lake states of Minnesota, Michigan and Wisconsin were added to the land already in farms, and about 2,500,000 acres were added in crops. Most of this land had been held previously by timber companies who had stripped it of its timber and carried it on their books as practically dead assets. In two of these states, Wisconsin and Minnesota, State Bureaus of Immigration and Settlement now guide and supervise these projects, and Michigan has promoted one of the outstanding land classification programs in the country.

National policies of reforestation and timber culture are widespread in Europe, and the forests in France, Germany, and Switzerland are the result of planned and controlled forestation policies. Farm forestry is a part of the cropping system in several European countries, the forest areas are so interwoven with other farming areas that the "lumber jack" has no part in the process, nor are sawmill and logging communities mere transients in the community.

Other examples of state or national land policies which could be discussed are the New Zealand graduated land tax; the Australian perpetual lease, the inheritance laws of England, Ireland, and France, the national purchase and sale policies of Ireland and

<sup>13</sup> Gillette, J. M., *Rural Sociology*, The Macmillan Company, New York, 1922, p. 213.

<sup>14</sup> Teele, R. P., *Economics of Land Reclamation*, A. W. Shaw & Company, New York, 1927, chaps. iii, iv.

Denmark; and the compulsory sale of large estates in Hungary, Roumania, Latvia, Czecho-Slovakia, and Poland. It is not our purpose, however, to attempt a detailed discussion of land economics, but only to give enough varied examples of such policies as will show that methods and policies are being devised to bring within the pale of public welfare the problems related to the conservation, utilization, ownership and settlement of land

**An Emergent Land Policy in the United States.**—The most encouraging step toward establishing or developing a land policy in the United States was taken at a meeting called by Secretary of Agriculture Hyde, the Association of Land Grant Colleges, and the University of Chicago, November 19-21, 1931. About twenty agricultural leaders and economists formulated a tentative definition of the purpose of federal and state land policies, set forth eighteen specific recommendations, and suggested that the committees proposed in its recommendations constitute "The National Land Use Planning Committee," and that a committee of 28 representatives of general farm organizations, co-operative organizations, and commercial, business, and technical associations be constituted a "National Advisory and Legislative Committee on Land Use "

This conference promulgated the following statement "The central purposes of these policies [federal and state] should be to develop and conceive our land resources in such a manner as to provide adequately for our present and future needs Any adequate land policy must provide for the preservation of soil fertility, must aid toward adjustment of production to demand, must provide for economic use of marginal land, and in other ways must make for the security of agriculture"<sup>15</sup>

We shall list and describe briefly the eighteen recommendations of this conference:

"1. Administration of public domain"—recommending that grazing ranges of the public domain be organized and coordinated with the national forests.

"2. Watershed protection"—recommending that watersheds which involve two or more states be administered under the supervision of the federal government

<sup>15</sup> *Recommendations of Land Utilization Conference* (mimeographed), November 23, 1931, obtainable from the Secretary of Agriculture of the United States, Washington, D C

"3. Protection of school lands"—recommending a consolidation of school lands in certain states, whereby they may be made available for grazing purposes.

"4. Agricultural credit"—recommending that a conference of all types of federal, state and national banks be called to formulate a definite and coordinated program for an immediate readjustment in land utilization and farm organization.

"5. Outlook work"—recommending that outlook reports be extended to include information and even recommendations "on the supply and demand for the different agricultural commodities in different parts of the country in the years ahead "

"6 The economic inventory of land resources and classification of soils"—recommending that all lands be classified on the basis of economic values and that land tax systems be readjusted accordingly

"7. Homestead interest"—recommending that only lands be opened for homesteads which give promise of providing satisfactory standards of living to settlers, and that marginal and sub-marginal lands be added to the public range

"8. Taxation"—recommending that everyone possible be required to pay state and federal taxes, that the expenditures of all units of government be held in check, and that better coordination be brought about between state and federal governments

"9 Land development"—recommending that land development enterprises be licensed and regulated

"10. Regional competition"—recommending that information of all kinds be made available which will tend to discourage uneconomical production in areas without "comparative advantages "

"11 Reclamation"—recommending that the Reclamation Service confine its efforts to completing projects rather than undertaking new ones

"12 Use of Marginal Land"—recommending that range cut-over, some occupied land, and tax-delinquent lands be considered marginal and, wherever possible, returned to forests

"13. Public retention or acquisition of land"—recommending that "after every effort possible to promote a sound type of private utilization," the federal and state governments utilize such lands for forestry, bird and game refuges, national and state parks, etc , even going so far as to purchase such marginal lands from private owners.

"14. Soil conservation"—recommending an immediate program for soil conservation

"15. Land classification"—recommending coordination and co-operation between state and federal governments in soil survey and land classification work.

"16 Decentralization of industry and its effects upon land utilization"—recommending that a study of the problem be made

"17. Regional conferences"—recommending that the Secretary of Agriculture, the Land Grant Colleges and other agricultural agencies call joint regional conferences on land utilization

"18 Creation of Committees"—recommending the creation of a "National Land Use Planning Committee" and a "National Advisory and Legislative Committee on Land Use "

As can readily be seen, the recommendations of this conference smacked of emergency moves and used almost exclusively economic criteria for the issues set forth. The conference, however, marks a long step forward and is an index to our final recognition of federal and state responsibilities as regards land.

#### LAND PROBLEMS AND RURAL SOCIAL PROBLEMS

**Land Ownership.**—It may seem a far cry from the technical problems of land classification, irrigation, and drainage to problems in rural sociology; but there is no problem more important to the farmer than his economic success, upon which the success of his social life depends. He is, therefore, vitally concerned with the possibilities and potentialities of the land he farms, furthermore, he is also concerned with the possibilities of its ownership. Therefore, any steps that the national or state governments can take which will make it possible for the farmer to become a land owner are of immense concern to him and of no little concern to the welfare of the nation and the state. The land is looked upon as a savings bank by the average farmer, and he is a more stable and self-respecting citizen if he is the owner of a farm than if he is a landless and shifting tenant. Ex-Governor Allen of Kansas declared that "in two years [during the World War] socialism, driven by the cleverest German propaganda, rose and broke three times against the land titles of France",<sup>16</sup> in other words, peasant

<sup>16</sup> Allen, H. S., *Kansas Problems*, Topeka, 1920, pp. 16-17, quoted from Ely and Morehouse, *op cit*, p. 22.



land ownership in France gave to her armies and her national population a stability and patriotism that would almost suffer national death before it would sacrifice its land ownership and its love of home.

**The Conflict of Land Values and the Rural Standard of Living.**—The actual increase in wealth created by agriculture finds its depository in one of three places: in increased land values, in cities founded on agriculture, or in the standard of living of rural people. The era of land speculation, through which we, as a nation, have nearly passed, but to some extent are still in, has led to an almost universal inflation of land values. If the ownership of farm lands is in the hands of those who till the soil, there is little or no competition between the farm standard of living and the value of farm lands. If, however, the lands are owned by others than those who till and live on them, there is a conflict between those who produce the crops and those who collect the rents, and this conflict is as real as that between labor and capital for the dividends of industry. Those who till the soil must measure the profitableness of agriculture in terms of the living it yields them, while those who own the land must measure it by the interest—rent—they can collect on their investments in land. Therefore, even so technical an economic problem as land values and land capitalization is a social problem of immense importance to the people who till the soil. Furthermore, it is a significant national problem of economic and social justice which is so deeply woven into our complex economic and social structure that the nation can rise or fall on what is ultimately done about it.

**Opportunities for Building Rural Communities on Vacant Lands.**—Rural communities in America are different from those in any section of the world which was settled prior to our colonial period. The isolated farmstead of America was a direct result of our favorable land situation, and families were drawn away from close community life by the lure of individual farm ownership. Our land situation is now no longer favorable, and we have begun the task of community improvement and community planning in rural districts. It would seem that the statesmanlike thing would be to plan rural communities in reclamation areas. This does not mean that it would be wise to attempt to force this at a time

when men are not seeking to enter the occupation of farming, but that wherever and whenever reclamation areas are settled they should be settled by means of communities.

The reason that millions of acres of cut-over land in the South Atlantic and Gulf Coast states are not inhabited and converted to profitable farming is that private land and lumber companies have not attacked the problem of reclamation and settlement in this way. The agricultural potentialities of some of these lands are very inviting, for the lands lie in an area of plentiful and well distributed rainfall, rich soil, and long frost-free growing seasons, and they are near the great central markets of the country. They offer opportunities for building more complete and more perfectly planned rural communities than any naturally developed rural community in America.<sup>17</sup> Thus far the lands available for carrying out such projects have generally suffered one of two fates. (1) Land and lumber companies, knowing the agricultural possibilities of the area from which the timber has been stripped, have sold the land to individual settlers whose attempts at settlement have resulted in almost universal, and often tragic, failures. The settler found himself incapable of financing the development of his land, with no town in which to market his farm products efficiently, and no schools, churches, or even roads and neighbors. Men who were eagerly seeking an opportunity for farm-home ownership, and land companies which were attempting to promote settlement, often in perfect honesty, were basing prospects solely upon the physical characteristics of the soil, forgetting or not knowing that the economic and social aspects of farming are just as essential to success as are the physical. (2) The other fate for these cut-over regions is that the land is being abandoned by the companies who bought it for its lumber because, having cut all the merchantable timber, they cannot afford even to retain ownership because of the taxes they are compelled to pay on lands no longer profitable. Where they do retain ownership, the land is allowed to grow up in briars and scrub-tree growth, much of which will never yield a lumber supply, and all of which will make its ultimate reclamation difficult and expensive.

If the state and federal governments would adopt a reclama-

<sup>17</sup> Branson, E. C., "Planned Colonies of Farm Owners," *Economic Problems of Reclamation*, United States Department of the Interior, Government Printing Office, Washington, D. C., 1929, pp. 17-27.

tion program of reforestation or group settlement in all such areas, they would avert both of the tragedies just described. Cut-over and wet land cannot be developed in any other way. The task of draining, road building, establishing local shipping points, and building communities demands a large outlay of capital and enough people to establish a complete community. Landless men who seek an opportunity for individual home ownership on these lands are most often financially unable to clear the land of stumps and undergrowth or even to build their own homes and equip themselves for farming. The farm must be handed to them, already cleared, partially improved, and possibly seeded. They must be able to obtain ample and supervised long-term credit, and they must be furnished community facilities.

The ideas presented here are not Utopian; on the contrary, they are the basis for the only probable methods for the development of many of our reclamation areas. The Australian state settlements, the Durham state settlement of California, and the private settlement of Hugh MacRae at Wilmington, North Carolina, are examples, to some degree, of the success of this method, for all of them have been put into effect in areas where all other methods have failed; and all of them have demonstrated that this method, if the results are successful financially, does reclaim the land, does help men to individual land ownership, and does establish high-class rural communities. Contrasted with this method of reclamation are the reversion of lands to idleness and wilderness, and the tragic failures of individuals who have attempted to establish isolated homes in these areas. Furthermore, even where such lands have been brought under cultivation by means of corporate or individual large-scale development but without the use of this method, tenant and hired-man farming has resulted, and reclamation areas thus developed constitute the worst rural slums of America.

The alternatives between which we must choose seem clear, and there is some indication at present that we shall choose correctly. In any case, it ought to be clear that the land problem is more than a soil problem and, even more than an economic problem, that it is one of developing a rural civilization. Land is the basis of agriculture; agriculture is the basis of rural life, and rural life and rural welfare are a part of the nation's business.

## QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

- 1 In what countries have there ever been what might be called "land revolutions"? Why?
- 2 What is the social influence of the system of land ownership? Give examples
- 3 Where are the large-farm and the small-farm sections in this country? Why is each type thus located?
- 4 Do you believe that land monopoly will ever prevail in the United States to any extent? Explain your answer.
- 5 What do you understand by the statement, "Our westward movement was an epoch in world history"?
- 6 What do you consider this country's outstanding land problem? Justify your answer
- 7 What do you think of the proposal that the federal government establish model rural communities in undeveloped land areas?
8. Discuss the statement, "The land problem is purely an economic problem"

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## CHAPTER VII

### THE PSYCHOLOGY OF FARM LIFE

#### THE FARMER AS A PSYCHO-SOCIAL CLASS

**Are Farmers a Social Class?**—The concept, *social class*, does not rest upon hard and fast differences, for the individuals who comprise a given class of society are never entirely different from those in another given class, nor do they differ from those who constitute society as a whole. This statement is just as true in the case of psychological traits and characteristics as in the case of physiological traits and characteristics, such as height and weight. But if a certain group of individuals—farm people, for example—are subjected generation after generation to forces—physical, environmental, traditional, institutional and occupational—which differ from those to which other groups are subjected, and particularly if these forces are fairly constant in their combination, then it is to be expected that this group's mode of life and behavior will be sufficiently differentiated to constitute these individuals a psycho-social class. Most students of society who have given the problem serious attention believe that the farmers are thus differentiated. According to K. L. Butterfield, "The fact is that farmers are different. They are not peculiar, not unique, nor inferior. They are just different. They live under different conditions from city people, they think in different terms, they breathe a different atmosphere, they handle their affairs differently—perhaps because they have different affairs to handle. This difference is not a difference in essential human qualities, but merely the effect of environment upon inherent traits."<sup>1</sup> Many others have made similar statements. Later in the chapter we shall attempt to describe some of the factors present in open-country living and in the occupation of farming which, through the types of habits and attitudes developed, tend to make farmers a distinct class.

<sup>1</sup> Groves, E. R., *The Rural Mind and Social Welfare*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1922, p. xiii.

**Subclasses within the Farm Class as a Whole.**—In addition to the difficulties of analysis which arise from the fact that farmers are like other individuals in their basic psychological and cultural make-up, further difficulties are found in the great differences in methods of farming in the various geographical sections of the world, and in the ethnic composition and economic status of farm people. These differentials, particularly the ethnic, economic and geographic, not only are responsible for the subclasses of the farm class as a whole, but control the channels through which culture in general flows. The economically poor tenant or cropper farmer suffers in comparison with the farmer who is a land owner, and the geographically more isolated farmer, in contrast to the suburban farmer, is at a serious disadvantage. Because of language and, sometimes, race prejudice, the immigrant farmer is handicapped in comparison with the native-born farmer. The small-grain extensive farmer differs widely in his mode of life, and probably in his thinking, from the intensive truck farmer, the same difference appears when the range farmer is contrasted with the dairy farmer, and the fruit grower or viticulturist with the corn, cotton or tobacco farmer. In fact, these differences are so great that, when they are considered in addition to those inherent in two generations or two countries, it is very doubtful whether any such broad characterization as "farmer-peasant class" does not conceal differences which are far more important than those it reveals as traits common to farmers as a class.<sup>2</sup> Nevertheless, the modal difference between the farmers of practically the entire United States and the other classes in our population is sufficiently marked so that a number of writers have attempted to catalogue the traits which are peculiar to the farm class.

**Some Classifications of Modal Psycho-social Traits of the Farm Class.**—Both K. L. Butterfield and J. M. Gillette have noted the following as some of the mental characteristics of farm people.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>2</sup> For use of the term, "farmer-peasant class," see Sorokin, P. A., and Zimmerman, C. C., *Principles of Rural-Urban Sociology*, Henry Holt and Company, Inc., New York, 1929.

<sup>3</sup> Butterfield, K. L., *Chapters in Rural Progress*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1907, chap. 11; Gillette, J. M., *Constructive Rural Sociology*, The Macmillan Company, New York, 1913, chap. vii.

1. Individualism
2. Conservatism
- 3 Intense radicalism at times
- 4 Deep-seated prejudices
- 5 Tendency to brood over more or less imaginary injuries
6. Tendency to be moody, discouraged, pessimistic, fatalistic and resigned

In 1917 L. L. Bernard catalogued very definitely what he believed to be the mental characteristics of the farmer, and later (1925) he elaborated on the list.<sup>4</sup> It is as follows:

1. Individualism
2. Conservatism
3. Orthodoxy
4. Suggestibility
5. Mysticism
- 6 Shyness
7. Suspiciousness
8. Introvert personality
- 9 Personal democracy
10. Sentimentality

Under the heading "Factors Contributing to Rural Psychology," H B Hawthorn gives the following classification, each factor having a reflex in a mental trait.<sup>5</sup>

*Environmental Factors*

1. Isolation
- 2 Personalism
3. Proximity to the elemental
- 4 Silence

*Occupational Factors*

1. Multiplicity of tasks on the farm
2. Seasonal and irregular character of farming
- 3 The standardization factor

*Social Factors*

1. Familism, hospitality, communism
2. Uniform and homogeneous character of rural social stimulus

<sup>4</sup> Bernard, L. L., "Theory of Social Attitudes," *American Journal of Sociology*, March, 1917, p 648, "Research Problems in the Psychology of Rural Life," *The Journal of Social Forces*, March, 1925, p 446

<sup>5</sup> Hawthorn, H B, *The Sociology of Rural Life*, The Century Company, New York, 1926, chap xiii.

3. Consanguineal character of rural society
4. The local and neighborhood character of rural society
5. Comparative absence of crowds, mobs and adventitious social aggregations of highly emotional character
6. Qualitative rather than quantitative association
7. Tendency to extreme in ages
8. People grouped into appreciation and interest types rather than into cliques and castes
9. Prevalence of custom and tradition

N L Sims lists the following as "Characteristic Mental Attitudes of the Farmer".<sup>6</sup>

1. Extreme individualism
2. Conservatism
3. The magical
4. An emotional intensity and high degree of suggestibility
5. Thriftiness and frugality
6. Suspiciousness
7. Frankness

A W Hayes, in "The Thought Processes of the Farmer," lists the farmer's typical attitudes and mental traits as follows.<sup>7</sup>

1. The farmer a direct thinker and speaker
2. Attitudes of fatalism
3. Follower, to considerable extent, of superstitions
4. "A man of deep convictions"
5. Conservatism
6. "Fogyism"
7. "Dwells upon experiences of the past"
8. "Resourcefulness"
9. Temperament

Of course, none of these writers contends that these are absolute and unvarying characteristics, but rather that there are differences in living, in work and in traditions in rural life which condition farmers in such a way that these tendencies in thought and action naturally follow.

Although Sorokin and Zimmerman do not catalogue mental traits as such, they present the following ten generalizations in

<sup>6</sup> Sims, N L, *Elements of Rural Sociology*, Thomas Y Crowell Company, New York, 1928, pp 226-238

<sup>7</sup> Hayes, A W, *Rural Sociology*, Longmans, Green and Company, New York, 1929, pp 167-174.



their chapter, "The Experience Worlds and the Psychological Processes of the Rural-urban Populations" <sup>8</sup>

1 The indirect experience of the urban man, on the average, seems to be wider and extends on a more numerous and various phenomena while his direct experience is rather narrower and extends on a less numerous and less manifold phenomena than that of a farmer-peasant . . .

2 The city population reads more newspapers and magazines, attends more movies, theaters, lectures, exhibitions, museums, and is served by a thicker net of telephones, telegraphs, radios and other means of diffusion of information than country people . . .

3 In so far as the farmer has a very narrow field of indirect knowledge he very easily may be misled or imbued with the most fallacious opinions, superstitions, and prejudices concerning all the phenomena which lie beyond the boundary line of his direct knowledge . . .

4 The wider range of direct experience of a farmer-peasant makes him more resistant to many inadequate and wrong theories, beliefs, and propaganda which may find considerable following within the bulk of the city population on account of the narrow character of its direct experience. . . .

5. For this reason and also because his indirect knowledge is not disproportionately developed, the farmer-peasant's mental luggage is more stable and less fluctuating than many attitudes and convictions of the city population, often based on an inadequate and over-developed indirect experience, which inadequacy makes many changes necessary in order to correct or to replace one attitude, opinion, or belief with another . . .

6 In perception, sensation, attention, imaginative reproduction, representation and associations, the farmer-peasant mind or nervous system is more sensitive regarding the objects and phenomena connected—directly or indirectly—with its occupational world and less sensitive in regard to many urban phenomena which are relatively strange to the farmer-peasant occupational environment . . .

7 On the whole, in comparison with the bulk of the city population, the farmer-peasant personality is less "soft" and "feminized" and more stern and austere or "puritanic" . . .

8 Thus, the above traits of virility, sternness, austereness, patience, endurance, and ability for continued effort must be conspicuously developed in the farmer-peasant personality type

9 The kinds of imagination and fantasy of rural and urban popu-

<sup>8</sup> Sorokin, P. A., and Zimmerman, C. C., *op cit*, chap. XIII

lations are likely to be different in their concrete forms—in regard to topics, images, associations, and combinations. . . .

10. Farmer-peasant logic and reasoning are sound within the field of phenomena of their direct experience and knowledge, and often are defective, faulty and biased in the field of the phenomena outside of their direct experience and on subjects generally little known by them

The lists just cited, and a careful study of the various authors' discussions show two important facts (1) There is sufficient agreement on the mental traits of farmers to constitute this group a psycho-social class; and (2) there are in all, excluding duplications, between fifteen and twenty different mental characteristics listed by these authors, which would of course be increased by the consideration of the work of other students of this phase of rural life.<sup>9</sup>

#### THE INDIVIDUAL PSYCHOLOGY OF THE FARMER

**The Influence of Farming as an Occupation upon the Farmer's Personality.**—Enough has been said to show clearly that the farmer is similar to any other individual as far as the fundamentals of human nature are concerned. He, and everyone else, gains experience through the same set of senses, and he has the same instincts and practically the same impulses as any other individual.

An individual reflects in his behavior or conduct what he does most habitually, in other words, his occupation furnishes his most habitual modes of activity, and these in turn dictate his patterns of thought. The truth of this is obvious, for in most cases his occupation constitutes his dominant interest, and this interest provides a springboard for his thoughts and attitudes. The farmer farms, he does not preach, teach, practice law or medicine, sail the seas, or mine coal. He is a farmer in both action and thought. Much of his work is manual labor; he works chiefly with things, not people, and with living and growing things, not machines. He adjusts his whole working program to the seasons and the weather. He works in comparative solitude for the most part; he lives and works at home, and spends a great part of his leisure

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<sup>9</sup> See especially Williams, J. M., *Our Rural Heritage*, and *The Expansion of Rural Life*, Alfred A. Knopf, New York, 1925 and 1926, respectively

time there. All of these become a part of both his conscious and his unconscious scheme of life, they make him what he is. In the case of an occupation that comes as near being culturally inherited as farming does, the attitudes generated by the occupation are transmitted from generation to generation, eventually becoming fixed. Children are trained, both consciously and unconsciously, to accept the traditional occupational attitudes of the group.

There is a vast difference between the individual whose adjustments are primarily to other individuals, and the one whose adjustments are primarily to animals or inanimate or non-conscious things, for in the first case there is a constant interchange of stimulus and response, while in the second only mastery or slavery is possible. The farmer is the master of certain elements in his physical environment, and a slave to others. He may say he loves his cows or hates the mud, but in neither case do his feelings show the same intensity that would be present if these emotions were aroused by a social situation and referred to other human beings. It is sometimes said that personality is built from the reflections from other people's lives, or that it is a self into which are woven the contacts and influence of other personalities. However, this is not the whole truth, for personality also reflects the influences of the physical world in which one works. One's body and mind, subjected to the constant play of any influence, eventually react to that influence in a definite and habitual manner. One of the characters in O'Neill's play, *Desire under the Elms*, the old farmer who has spent his whole life battling the stony fields of a New England hill farm, says, "I'm lonely. I'm hard. God's lonely, God's hard." In the following lines from *The Growth of the Soil*, Hamsun brings to a close the description of Isak, the old Margrave:

Isak at his sowing; a stump of a man, a barge of a man to look at, nothing more. Clad in homespun-wool from his own sheep, boots from the hide of his own cows and calves. Sowing—and he walks religiously bareheaded to that work; his head is bald just at the very top, but all the rest of him shamefully hairy, a fan, a wheel of hair and beard, stands out from his face. 'Tis Isak, the Margrave.

A tiller of the ground, body and soul, a worker of the land without respite, a ghost risen out of the past to point the future, a man from

the earliest days of cultivation. A settler in the wilds, nine hundred years old, and withal a man of the day.<sup>10</sup>

These two quotations depict strikingly the influence of the forces constantly at play upon the personality of the man who farms, and many other modern realistic novels of rural life present this same type of picture. It is not that the farmer has no social contacts, or that those in other occupations do not have to make some adjustment to their physical environment; it is rather the difference in degree that is of importance, for the farmer's thoughts and actions are concerned to a much greater extent with adjustments to the stern forces of nature than is the case with those in other occupations. Galpin gives a vivid description of the farmer's contest with these forces:

The farmer in act is the tiller of the soil. He is the man, hoe in hand, with bent back, striking a blow at the weakest point in the earth's crust, pulling upward, loosening the earth's grip upon a portion of the soil, lifting it for a moment, and finally turning it upon its face. This momentary, mechanical victory is repeated, clod by clod, yard by yard, hour after hour, day after day all through the season of soil preparation. Unremittingly looking his earth antagonist in the eye, the land-worker gives and takes—gives his blows and takes the after-effects into his own body and soul.<sup>11</sup>

The farmer is different from the professional man or salesman because he deals chiefly with physical, not social, situations. He is different from the industrial or machine worker because many of the things he works with are living. Plants and animals are not like power-driven machines whose monotonous and clock-like routine necessitates such precision and constancy as to make their operators absolute slaves of machine speed and motion, on the contrary, they are organisms that respond to care and nurture, that live, grow, and die. Without doubt, the animals with which the farmer works have some influence on his personality. Animal pets have played a part in the lives of all known peoples since animals were first domesticated; they are almost a part of human society. It is not impossible that some of the food tabus of the ancient Hebrews and the present-day Hindus had their origin in the influence of such pets, whose presence and characteristics literally con-

<sup>10</sup> Hamsun, Knut, *The Growth of the Soul*, Alfred A. Knopf, New York, 1922, pp. 151, 152.

<sup>11</sup> Galpin, C. J., *Rural Life*, p. 4.

stituted them a part of the tribal sentiment; and some oriental peoples, into whose lives are woven centuries of agricultural traditions, regard even plant life with marked reverence.<sup>12</sup>

Not only has husbandry as a habit of mind and a sentiment developed from the handling of plants and animals, but it is more than likely that animism had its origin in the same source. The mysteries of the propagation and growth of organic life are only partially understood. The miracle of a species of grain that will bring forth an hundredfold is something to ponder over, especially when the fortune of a man and his family is absolutely dependent upon faith in the working of such a miracle. It is not surprising, therefore, that farmers are slow to substitute quantitative science and the cold calculations of business for their naïve trust in the scheme of nature and their animistic theories regarding nature.

**The Influence of Weather, Climate, and Seasons.**—The forces of nature have little influence on the average urban occupation, for the weather is excluded by walls and roofs, temperature is controlled by means of artificial heat and electric fans, and even daylight is no longer essential for work. Furthermore, these phases of nature in no way imperil, or even influence, the urban worker's income. Galpin gives the following sharply contrasting picture:

Climatic forces, operating through the atmospheric envelope—heat, light, moisture, cold, frost, ice—all are the farmer's friendly allies when timely, but his inveterate foes when ill-timed or excessive. An excessive dryness increases the strain in plowing and seeding and cultivating. Excessive moisture makes mud in the path of his transportation and doubles every ascent. In the seasons when the climatic forces are in flux, when the moods of the air are fickle, in spring and fall, rural life is under the special strain of uncertainty, risk, danger, and economic disaster. Many a load becomes stationary. Many a plan is unfulfilled. Many a sudden shift-about of farm work finds new inertia to be overcome. For every smile of springtime that cheers the countryman's lot, there comes inevitably an undeserved frown. The impetuous and wholly irrational whims of weather educate the rural mind to caution, if not suspicion, in receiving the advance of friendly forces.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>12</sup> Rihbany, A. M., *The Syrian Christ*, Houghton Mifflin Company, New York, 1922, p. 25.

<sup>13</sup> Galpin, C. J., *Rural Life*, pp. 11-12.

Numerous signs and superstitions about weather are current in farming, and conversations between farmers tend to seasons and the weather as their subject. This, however, is not due solely to the lack of social contacts and the consequently narrower range of topics, but to the tremendous importance of seasons and weather in the lives of rural people. The farmer's helplessness in the face of these forces that are beyond his control has led to a resignation and even to a high degree of fatalism in his attitudes and beliefs. The primitive religious tenet, "Whatever is to be, will be," has broken down much more rapidly in urban than rural life. Beliefs such as these are handicaps—even inhibitions at times—to our present-day methods of calculating results in terms of known causes and effects. J. M. Williams makes the point that the farmer's slowness in accepting business criteria as measures of farm production is due in no small degree to the fact that, not being sure of results, he has grown to emphasize "industrious working" and not economic returns as his measure of value.<sup>14</sup> Williams believes further that the farmer's attitude of resignation has made him the easy prey of landlords and business men, for the farmer conceives the processes of the business world much as he does those of nature—as incalculable—and he emphasizes mere industriousness instead of shrewd dealing with shrewd men.<sup>15</sup>

The reliance of the old-time farmer upon the almanac was proverbial, and his belief in signs, although sometimes exaggerated, is by no means extinct. The author has gathered 467 different signs and superstitions which are known and, to some extent, believed in rural communities. Over one-fourth of them, 27.8 per cent, refer to climate and weather, and the majority, 54.9 per cent, refer to plants and animals in addition to climate and weather. The point we wish to make here is not that superstitions, signs and charms have greater influence among rural than urban people (although this is probably the case), but that farming as an enterprise is influenced by the uncertainty of weather and seasons to such an extent that specious explanations of the causes and effects of this uncertainty have become widespread among rural people.

<sup>14</sup> Williams, J. M., *Our Rural Heritage*, p. 35

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 37.

**The Influence of Isolation.**—Isolation plays no small part in influencing the farmer's personality, for it is present in practically every aspect of rural life. The farm home is an isolated residence, and the farm family a comparatively isolated social unit. The farmer himself works in solitude thousands of hours during his life, he sets his own day's stint, and makes his own choice of the work to be done. Few of his mental adjustments and the solution of his problems are based on conference with others, and even when such conference is possible he usually prefers to think things out by himself at home and make up his own mind independently. His thinking has its basis in his own individual experience to a much greater extent than that of the man who works in a gang or under a boss. Furthermore, because he is thus compelled to make adjustments and reach conclusions by himself, these adjustments and conclusions finally become fixed as a part of his personality. Because he works in solitude he is meditative, his ideas are not mere working hypotheses but philosophies. His solitude shields him from any conflict in ideas, no fellow workman breaks his meditation or challenges his daydream, and he therefore develops deep convictions which cannot be shaken quickly or easily.

There is little definite information regarding the exact influence of isolation, and because the little that is known on this point concerns abnormal or extreme cases, it is difficult to calculate, or even guess, the significance of the farmer's relative lack of human contacts. In all the few cases known and studied of people who have for years lived without any human contacts, the individual grew to maturity without developing many of the habits, attitudes, and even physical adjustments which children learn in the first few years of their lives.<sup>16</sup> Prisoners kept in solitary confinement undergo a distortion of attitudes, becoming self-conscious, suspicious, overly emotional and even anti-social,<sup>17</sup> their minds disintegrate, and their whole personalities undergo drastic changes. Although the farmer's isolation is not as extreme as either of the types just mentioned, he does, nevertheless, from childhood to old age lack thousands of the contacts which are a part of the

<sup>16</sup> On feral men, see Park, R. E., and Burgess, E. W., *Introduction to the Science of Sociology*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1921, pp. 239-243.

<sup>17</sup> Bogardus, E. S., *Fundamentals of Social Psychology*, The Century Company, New York, 1924, p. 92.

average urban person's social environment, and as a result he is more stable, staunch or stolid than the urban individual.

**The Thought Processes of Farm People.**—As has been seen, the relative isolation of farmers has tended to make them markedly independent. Consequently they have been compelled to solve their problems and manage their affairs with the aid of the experience which they themselves have gained or which their fathers have handed down to them. Such a stock of experience, in existence for many years and tested many times, tends to become a body of operating techniques, and as such acquires a definite standing as a method of living and working. Because of his isolation, the farmer is not subjected to the forces of social change which are continually upsetting old ideas in other occupational groups, he escapes that insecurity which is inherent in our modern industrial life, according to Tannenbaum.

Change is the very life of industry today. New methods, new processes, new inventions, new markets, new fashions, new fads, new discoveries and organizations characterize the greater part of the industrial world. Every change means a change for somebody. Insecurity is the dominant fact in the lives of every class in the community, no one escapes it.<sup>18</sup>

Tannenbaum concludes his picture of this insecurity by contrasting industrial life of today with the life of the medieval serf who, poor and bound to the land though he was, nevertheless enjoyed safety and security. He had his little piece of land, his own house, a few animals, there was no chance of his being fired from his job. Although many an American farm tenant of today does not enjoy security to the same degree as did the serf, the security of the landowning operator in this country is far greater than that of our farm tenants.

Thus the farmer, because of this security, has acquired a traditional attitude of independence, and his individual entrepreneurship and his isolation have developed in him the habit of making decisions on his own responsibility. This habit of seemingly independent thinking is probably the most striking characteristic of the American farmer. Its effects, however, have been both beneficial and detrimental to him and to society as a whole, for although it has given him a habit of mind which has made him a

<sup>18</sup> Tannenbaum, F., *The Labor Movement*, G. P. Putnam's Sons, New York, 1921, chap. 1.



great factor in national leadership when he has had the opportunity of contact with the techniques of science, business and politics, it has been his greatest handicap when this opportunity does not offer. Since these techniques have until very recently been limited to urban affairs, urban and national life and problems, rather than rural life and problems, have reaped the benefit of the farmer's growing interest in these techniques. But all too often his independence of thought and action has manifested itself only in individualism and lack of cooperation in relation to his own life and problems.

The conditions under which the farmer has labored in the past, and the methods he has followed in his work, have resulted in two outstanding mental attitudes: he has always been conservative, and he has always been individualistic. These are the natural results of his isolation, his lack of cooperation, and his failure, until recently, to adopt any of the techniques of scientific farming.

Because of a number of causes, some of which have already been mentioned, the farmer is probably a deeper—or at least a more meditative—thinker than any other man who does the same amount of manual labor. He works—it often becomes a struggle—with nature which at times buffets and beats him down, but at others yields him gifts far beyond the fruits of his own effort. He constantly studies and ponders over the ways of nature, and the fact that he fails to generalize regarding them or to analyze them does not obviate their influence upon him. He is compelled to live year in and year out with the forces of nature as his partners or opponents, to make adjustments to them, and to use them. He may try to explain them by means of signs, to mitigate them, or to employ them as the best methods of scientific farming recommend. But in any case he is part of a different process than the man who feeds a machine in a factory, fills a grocery order, or delivers a load of coal, for he is dealing not with machines but with nature in its pure state, and his adjustments are to nature as much or more than to man. Therefore the farmer's thinking differs from that of other men who work with their hands. In addition, he is compelled to think more than these other workers. It is, perhaps, valid to say that men do not think except when compelled to do so. In the city the manual laborer's hourly and daily routine is so thoroughly determined by mechanical devices that he seldom has reason to think. On the other hand, the farm-

er's hourly and daily routine is likely to change, to be broken into, to be disrupted at any time, and consequently he is called upon to think, for he cannot sit back and wait for the foreman or someone far up the line of a chain of machines to straighten out the trouble, he must think and act for himself and use his own judgment. When we turn to the skilled professions—medicine, law, teaching, preaching, business—the need for thought is not only greater than it is in the factory, but, without doubt, even greater than it is on the farm.

Furthermore, there is inherent in urban life a constant change; the city is a place of fads and fashions. The advertisements, electric signs, show windows and what not, upon which millions of dollars are spent in the city, act as stimuli on the urban dweller. This constant change and these stimuli are for the most part absent in the farm environment, and their absence is reflected not only in the farmer's everyday life, but in his unwavering and purposeful attitudes toward life. He is not used to these subtle and often fictitious stimuli and the resulting changes, and therefore does not believe in them. Far from following these fads and fashions, he thinks they are not only wasteful but even "wicked." His attention in the past has not been concentrated upon the constant desire to escape work and seek pleasure, in other words, he has not sought a change for the sake of change.

However, it must not be concluded that all urban dwellers spend all their time in catering to these influences, and that all rural people react violently and adversely to all of them. But these different standards do undoubtedly constitute two constant influences in the lives of these two groups. Some of their effects on the farmer are found in his conservatism, his belief in the rightness and righteousness of his work and in saving as a sacred duty, and his consequent condemnation of show as being merely conspicuous waste.

This independence of thought, the relative absence of outside contacts, the aversion to change, and the other factors just mentioned have made our farmers an extremely conservative group of people. The effect on this country is twofold. The presence, in the population, of a large group of individuals—millions, in the case of our farmers—who refuse to lose their heads or change their opinions at the slightest provocation, is bound to act to our country's advantage as a stabilizing influence. On the other hand,

this same conservatism has been responsible for the defeat of many progressive and necessary state legislative programs because the representatives from the isolated rural districts have remained too loyal to their constituents' aversion to change. The most serious disadvantage of this conservatism, however, is that it is reflected in the farmer's relations with his own community, his own institutions, and even his own occupation. In some cases it has kept alive so thoroughly the old ways of thinking and doing as to make impossible the adoption of methods of scientific farming instead of the traditional and even "sign" farming, it is responsible for the backwardness of rural educational facilities and for the maintenance of traditional religious ideas with their forbidding restraints and lack of appeal to youth, and it has precluded the introduction into rural communities of other facilities inherent in present-day life, which farm boys and girls are desiring more and more since they have learned that people in other walks of life enjoy them as a matter of course. But notwithstanding these detrimental effects of the farmer's outlook on life, it cannot be denied that these attitudes constitute him for the most part a man with a serious purpose in life, one upon whom we can depend to preserve the integrity of our social institutions, and one whose general attitude toward his own and his family's life—in fact, toward all life—is so stable as to make him a great moral force in our social life.

### THE SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY OF FARM LIFE

#### **The General Absence of Group Technique in Rural Life.**

—The self-sufficient farm is an individual or, at most, a family enterprise. The farm work is not done by gang labor, there is no need for it to be organized as a part of the activity of a larger enterprise; it is not planned or carried out by conference. The great majority of American farms are one-man or two-men enterprises.

The American farmer is an individualist in practice and ideas, and individualism is inimical to group concepts and technique. The extreme individualist is unwilling to give and take, and thus it is impossible for him to participate in group thinking. He does not care to lead; he is unwilling to follow. His own family, however, he expects to rule, and he grants every other head of a family the same privilege. The long history of pioneer life, the

whole system of farming as an individual enterprise, and the isolation inherent in farming have contributed a technique of thought and action which constitutes a severe handicap to cooperation and group action among farmers. Furthermore, the young farmer depends upon neither a scientific blueprint nor his own originality, for farming is learned largely by apprenticeship. He seems to think that his knowledge springs from himself alone, but, as a matter of fact, it is based upon custom and tradition.

When the farmer does become a member of a face-to-face group of greater size than his own family, he enters a formally organized group. He goes to church, to the Chautauqua, or to lectures, where his part is that of spectator and listener. He is a member of few discussion groups, for rural gatherings in which there is discussion or debate have in the past been for pleasure and recreation rather than an arrival at group conclusions. Consequently they have contributed little, if anything, to developing group or cooperative attitudes and activities.

The farmer's group enterprises are highly institutionalized. The service followed by his church, and even his religious beliefs, are laid down for him by custom and tradition. The rural school affords him no opportunity to participate in group discussions on educational questions, for paid experts are in charge of it. The farmer is not highly conscious of his government and its policies; if they enter his thought at all, it is as something which is happening at too remote a place to touch him very closely. His own family is practically the only group in which he participates in any whole-hearted, personal way, but even the family is subjected to a traditionally autocratic regime in which the parents—most frequently the father—play a more dominant rôle than is the case in urban families.

**Socialization and Culturization Retarded in Rural Society.**—Socialization involves the participation of the individual in the spirit, purpose, decisions and actions of a group.<sup>19</sup> It is the process whereby individuals consciously or unconsciously learn to act, feel and think together dependably—but not necessarily alike—in behalf of human welfare other than their own.<sup>20</sup>

Farmers have learned their occupational technique by appren-

<sup>19</sup> Burgess, E. W., *The Function of Socialization in Social Evolution*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1916, p. 2

<sup>20</sup> Bogardus, E. S., *op cit*, p. 229

tieship and not by the wholesale culture borrowing which has prevailed in industry, and they have lived in isolation. Consequently, in the past they have had few problems on which any conference was needed and therefore, as individuals, they have not learned to think, feel and act together dependably. According to Bogardus, it is this dependable or habitual cooperative thought and action that bring about the change whereby social self-control, social responsibility, and personal enrichment and expansion are developed to a greater degree. Because the farmer has for the most part been deprived of these experiences and as a result has little personal socialization, any rural project or program which relies on this type of thought and action is bound to suffer.

Other than the family, few, if any, rural face-to-face groups are "dependable" in the sense of being consciously interdependent, and the farm family therefore makes a greater contribution to the socialization of the individual. However, its techniques and attitudes are not extended to human relationships outside its own threshold, and it fails in this respect, since socialization involves an individual's attitude toward *all* persons and *all* groups. The farmer from childhood to maturity has lacked the stimuli of the play groups, the neighborhood life, and the contacts that abound in urban life, and this lack is likely to continue through his life, for he has no "gangs," no trade unions, few fraternal organizations, and he enters practically no recreation groups, in short, his day-to-day life does not bring to him the heterogeneous and cosmopolitan contacts of the city. It is no insult to him, therefore, to say that he is not highly socialized.

Man alone has culture. We do not mean culture in the sense of refinement of manners, but in the sense of traditions, mores and sentiments. Culture is the body of ideas and beliefs which activates and unifies a people. It is their mode of life in both attitude and action, and in a large measure controls their career. Culture is composed of numerous culture traits which together constitute a culture complex. A culture trait is a unit of thought or action—some one manner, means, or method of thinking or doing; and a culture complex is a group of these culture traits which have arisen and which hang together, such as a system of agricultural production.<sup>21</sup> For example, in American agriculture there are the

<sup>21</sup> Wissler, C., *Man and Culture*, Thomas Y. Crowell Company, New York, 1923, pp. 1, 3, 49-52.

corn belt and the cotton belt, areas which are organized on the bases of culture complexes which hold the people within these areas—both the tillers of the soil and the business men—in line with customs and traditions of farming that are generations old.<sup>22</sup> Once established, a culture holds its ground against the impact of new ideas, it seldom gives way in mass, but rather by the slow infiltration of new culture traits. The more isolated a group of people is, the stauncher is their culture, and the harder it is for a new culture trait to filter in. Because of the comparative isolation in which the American farmer lives, his culture habitually lags behind that of the civilization of which he is a part.

Culture traits are either invented or borrowed, or they are the result of the convergence of two or more old modes of thought and action. Rural life is a handicap to all of these ways of developing new culture traits. The long-time adaptations to seasons, to climate and to the general rule of physical and natural laws discourage new ideas. Culture is dependent upon communication, and the lack of a means of communication makes culture borrowing the exception among rural people. News and new ideas reach the farmer later than they do the urban man, and, when received, their dissemination throughout the rural community is slow. They run athwart many customs and modes of thinking that are deeply imbedded in the minds of rural people. (However, among certain groups of modern farmers, this has been somewhat modified by the increased circulation of city dailies, the radio, and increased library facilities.) Furthermore, farming differs so widely from other occupations and professions that the borrowing of culture traits is usually not feasible. The convergence of established culture traits is unlikely because the reign of one trait is likely to be absolute over wide geographical areas. Practically the only examples of noticeable cultural changes in given rural areas have occurred when a large section has been rapidly peopled by foreigners. However, science and business, which are rapidly entering agriculture, are exceptions to what has just been said. These are systems of culture which have been almost entirely developed outside the field of agriculture, and which the farmer is borrowing more and more. Once having

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<sup>22</sup> Vance, R. B., *Human Factors in Cotton Culture*, University of North Carolina Press, Chapel Hill, 1929, chap. x.

learned to use them, he can make his own adaptation of their methods, or invent new methods based upon them. But here also the inertia of rural thought and action has been a serious handicap to their diffusion.<sup>23</sup>

**Comparative Absence of Mass or Mob Psychology.**—According to Le Bon, a crowd is "subjected to the law of mental unity and forms a single being";<sup>24</sup> and Sidis states that "intensity of personality is in inverse proportion to the number of aggregated men," and that "cramping of voluntary movements sets the stage for mass or mob action."<sup>25</sup> The opportunities among farmers for either of these conditions are few, for the farmer is not a man of the masses nor is his life lived in crowds. In fact, practically everything described as a characteristic of his mind is a prophylaxis to crowd or mob behavior. The farmer is individualistic, meditative and independent in thought, a crowd is fickle, suggestible, and easily aroused to violent action. A crowd operates in a gang or clique spirit, and follows a leader—to all of which the farmer is particularly unadapted.

In an analysis of buying motives, Copeland showed that advertisers consider farmers highly rationalistic in this respect. He classified buying motives as emotional or rationalistic, as follows:

<i>Emotional</i>	<i>Rationalistic</i>
distinctiveness	handiness
emulation	efficiency in operation and
economic emulation	dependability of quality
pride in personal appearance	durability
social achievement	enhancement of earnings
romance	economy in use
gratification of taste	
pleasure in recreation	
entertainment	
greater leisure	

As his criterion of measurement he used a comparison of the advertisements in popular magazines, women's magazines and national weeklies, with those appearing in farm papers, and he found that the latter appealed to rationalistic motives almost twice as frequently as to the emotional. The reverse was true in the case

<sup>23</sup> Probably the best discussion of the development and borrowing of culture is to be found in Thorstein Veblen's writings. See his *The Instinct of Workmanship*, chap. III, and *Imperial Germany and the Industrial Revolution*, chap. V, both published by Viking Press, Inc., New York.

<sup>24</sup> Le Bon, Gustave, *The Crowd*, T. Fisher Unwin, London, 1896, chap. 1.

<sup>25</sup> Sidis, Boris, *The Psychology of Suggestion*, D. Appleton and Company, New York, 1921, chap. XXVII.

of advertisements in the magazines and periodicals whose readers were chiefly urban <sup>26</sup>

Fads, fancies and fashions penetrate and are diffused in rural communities more slowly than in urban, for they are based upon an aptitude to change which the farmer lacks. Often he hears of them only long after they have become widespread among urban people, there are no suitable channels for their rapid diffusion in rural communities; the farmer's temperament and attitude influence him against them, and, furthermore, practically all the "work" and "religious attitudes" of the rural community taboo such displays of fickleness. Crazes and fads are transient, short-lived; if they cannot spread quickly, they do not spread at all, and the farmer's few and infrequent social gatherings and contacts do not provide for their speedy diffusion.

The country camp meeting is almost the only occasion upon which farmers are subjected to the conditions which make for crowd or mob behavior, and on such occasions they do succumb to emotionalism, but even here the process is slow. The meeting must be held when farm work is slack, and it must be "protracted." The farm community must be backward—Billy Sunday and similar evangelists no longer hold meetings in the more sophisticated rural communities—for it is among the backward and ignorant rural people that the shouting and rolling, present in primitive religions, take place. Phenomena such as these two just mentioned are not to be explained so much by the so-called "psychology of the farmer" as by the persistence of old religious superstitions and his failure to include, in his otherwise stable and independent course of life and thought, the newer systems of religious thought.

#### THE FARMER AND THE PUBLIC MIND

**The Farmer and the Public.**—The public is usually thought of as being, in some vague way or other, all society, but it is more exact to think of it as a group which is wider in scope than face-to-face groups, and less crystallized in nature than institutions. As Bogardus says

The public is a quasi-temporary group. It lacks the structure and prescribed limits of a permanent group, and the face-to-face or bodily presence characteristic of assemblies or crowds.

<sup>26</sup> Copeland, M. T., *Principles of Merchandising*, A. W. Shaw Company, New York, 1925, chap. vi.



The rise of the public came about as a result of the modern development of means of communication, such as the invention of the printing press, the railroad, the telegraph, the telephone and the radio. Consequently, individuals can feel, think, and even act alike, without coming together either as crowds or assemblies.<sup>27</sup>

In what ways and to what extent is the farmer a member of publics? The fact that all means of communication are fewer in rural than urban communities imposes conditions which prevent him from being a member of as many different publics or as thoroughgoing a member of a single public as the urban person is. Furthermore, the dominant reign of one institution—the home—in the farmer's life, and the rigorous influence of his work upon his time and attention make it impossible for him to develop that frame of mind which is essential if he is to be a member of numerous publics.

Publics are sometimes fickle, even at times resembling crowds in their emotionalism and the transience of their attitudes, and here the rural population furnishes a constant stabilizing element when war, financial depressions or other public catastrophes are imminent. At times it is desirable, and even necessary, that the national population as a whole be woven into a single public, and at such times the attitudes of the remote rural sections are mobilized only slowly for the task, home and individual working attitudes giving way slowly to the larger public interest. The period of the World War is an example of this. The urban areas of the east, many of them dominantly industrial, were willing to enter the war as early as 1915, but the middle west, dominantly agricultural, was not in favor of participating until months after war was actually declared.

Until very recently publics were—still are, to a considerable extent—formed from or by means of public assemblies. The farmer is not as used to attending or participating in such assemblies as the urban man, for he does not work in groups, belongs to no trade unions, uses committee organizations only rarely, and attends few farmers' meetings, consequently he develops little group spirit and collective thinking.<sup>28</sup>

<sup>27</sup> Bogardus, E. S., *op. cit.*, p. 273.

<sup>28</sup> For a deeper appreciation of the influence of such types of behavior, see Follett, M. P., *The New State*, Longmans, Green and Company, New York, 1921, chap. 11.

**The Farmer and Public Opinion.**—Ellwood defines public opinion as follows:

By public opinion we mean the more or less rational, collective judgment formed by a group regarding a situation. It is formed by the action and reaction of many individual judgments. It implies not so much that uniformity of opinion has been reached by all members of the group, or even by a majority, as that a certain trend and direction of the opinions and judgments of the individual members has been reached.<sup>29</sup>

Public opinion depends for its formation upon the facilities at hand for the exchange of ideas, and upon discussion, criticism, and other ripening and stabilizing thought processes. Like individual opinion, it arises out of experience, out of human adaptations to a constant series of forces either social or physical. It often becomes a point of view handed down from the past—what is known in religious terminology as a “persuasion,” that is, it has an affective or emotional tone. It does not change quickly unless a crisis confronts it. As Cooley says, “The unity of public opinion, like all vital unity, is one not of agreement but of organization, of interaction and mutual influence.”<sup>30</sup> Walter Lippmann holds that people think in images which become stereotypes,<sup>31</sup> and that these stereotypes become molds of thought or opinion which, when broken, bring about mental and emotional chaos for a time. Often the conclusions which are firmly adhered to were reached by a slow process of adaptation, or handed down by tradition, and the premises upon which they are based are unknown to the individual or group concerned. But there is a natural aversion to giving them up, because no means are at hand whereby others may be formed to replace them.

The diversity of public opinion depends on the facilities for the dissemination of ideas and, to a considerable extent, on the opportunities for discussion. As will be shown in Chapter XV, rural homes and communities lack both volume and diversity of reading matter. Discussion in rural communities is confined almost entirely to gossip, and gossip is usually much more concerned with

<sup>29</sup> Ellwood, C. A., *The Psychology of Human Society*, D. Appleton and Company, New York, 1925, p. 228.

<sup>30</sup> Cooley, C. H., *Social Organization*, Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, 1916, pp. 11, 85, 122.

<sup>31</sup> Lippmann, Walter, *Public Opinion*, Harcourt, Brace and Company, New York, 1922, pp. 95 ff.

personal than public issues. Most of these communities are almost completely devoid of debates and discussion, they have had few opportunities for them, and as long as this has been the case, they have clung rigidly to old opinions and participated little in the larger issues of society, for it is by means of discussion that the common will is developed and common responsibility accepted.<sup>82</sup>

Although public opinion is very powerful in rural communities on matters which concern the home, farming as an occupation and an enterprise, and the integrity of these two dominating rural interests, it is extremely weak where interests of a wider scope are concerned. For example, rural districts are very strait-laced on questions of traditional morals, a wayward girl, a wild boy or a broken family incurs ostracism to a degree uncommon in urban communities, national, international and world issues, on the contrary, do not strike fire to rural opinion as quickly as they do in urban districts where the means of communication is both better and more extensive.

#### THE CHANGING PSYCHOLOGY OF FARM LIFE

**The New Rural Life.**—Practically every factor or influence that makes rural life differ from urban is less pronounced in its effects today than has been the case in the past. Contacts, particularly those with the outside world, have been multiplied many times within the last generation. Farm work is being increasingly reduced to machine processes. The ease with which rural people can now travel has lessened the influence of the home in comparison with that of other institutions. Increased educational opportunities have introduced into rural life an increased amount of the world's culture, the consolidation of rural schools is giving the farmer a larger community, and the newspaper and radio are rapidly putting him in daily touch with the whole world. The introduction of scientific and business methods into agriculture, and their rapid adoption, help him to catch step with others of his own generation, and the growth of cooperative enterprises and other similar types of farmer organizations is teaching him group technique. If all of these conditions become more and more widespread, but if at the same time the stultifying influences of the standardization of industry and the industrial wage system can

<sup>82</sup> Follett, M. P., *op cit.*, chap. xiii.

be kept out of farming, the open country should develop an extremely desirable type of individual and community life

**The New Farmer.**—As these factors enter rural life, they change not only the mode of farm life, but also the farmer's mode of thinking. Boys and girls, born and reared on farms, no longer feel that their destinies are sealed by rural opportunities alone, for the same cultural paths that introduce new elements into the economic and social life of rural communities also lead rural people out of rural occupations and areas into other channels of life. In a study of the vocational choices of farmers' sons attending North Carolina State College of Agriculture and Engineering, W. A. Anderson discovered that only 56.1 per cent had made a definite choice of vocation, and that only 10 of the 106 cases which constituted this percentage had chosen farming. This study covered 189 students, 65 of whom were taking courses in agriculture. Of these 65, only 30, or 46.1 per cent, had decided upon their vocation, and only 7, or 10.8 per cent, had chosen agriculture.<sup>33</sup>

The failure of students in colleges of agriculture to return to the farm often brings forth the easy-going explanation that the "college trains boys away from the farm," which is unquestionably true to some degree. This, however, is more to be praised than blamed, for the college puts its students in touch with the broader aspects and opportunities of the world, and is but a pronounced example of the way in which farm people as a whole are becoming a part of the larger society and thus escaping from the narrowing and stultifying influences described in the early sections of this chapter.

These factors which are entering rural life and widening the horizon of farm boys and girls are not confined to college influences alone, but are widespread, as is shown by a rather extensive study, made by the Institute of Social and Religious Research, of the occupational choices of high school students. In its country and village studies it obtained answers to questionnaires from about 2000 students in 53 communities. In answer to the question, "Would you consider farming as a life work?" 1108 attitudes were given, and of these only 458, or 41.2 per cent, were positive, 650, or 58.8 per cent, being definitely negative. Of these

<sup>33</sup> Anderson, W. A., "The Occupational Attitudes and Choices of a Group of College Men," *Journal of Social Forces*, University of North Carolina Press, Chapel Hill, 1927-1928, vol. vi, no. 2, pp. 278-283, and vol. vi, no. 3, pp. 467-473.

650 who expressed a definite desire to leave the farm, 171 indicated by their answers a definite conception of other opportunities, the boys listing 17, and the girls 26, other occupations or professions which they expected to enter.<sup>34</sup>

In conclusion, it may be well to list the factors that are at work and the trends that are appearing which are probably destined to reshape—almost, if not completely—the individual and social psychology of rural life. They are as follows.

- 1 The increase in, and wider use of, all forms of communication, particularly the newspaper and the radio

- 2 The increased mobility of present-day farmers, due chiefly to good roads and the automobile

- 3 The increase in urban-rural contacts, due chiefly to the first two factors

- 4 The broadening of rural community life, represented by consolidated schools and trade-area communities

- 5 The increased educational facilities of all kinds—schools, and also opportunities for adult education, agricultural journals, newspapers, and the radio

- 6 The rapid penetration of science into agriculture

- 7 The commercialization of agriculture

- 8 The rapid mechanization of farm processes

- 9 The growth of farmer cooperative movements of all kinds.

- 10 The reduction of insecurity in farming, due to insurance, scientific control of pests, and protection both through cooperation and on the part of the government

From the foregoing it is clear that the farm need no longer—and in many cases, does not—suffer its former cultural and social isolation. The infiltration into rural life of outside ideas and ideals will continue even more rapidly in the future, scientific farming and the mechanization of farm processes will likewise continue, and cooperative enterprises, both economic and social, will increase. The kind of rural life and the characteristics of the American farmer of the future are speculated upon in Chapter XXIX. One thing, however, is clear—the farmer of the future will differ radically from the farmer of both yesterday and today, as will rural life itself.

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<sup>34</sup> Brunner, E. deS., Hughes, G. S., and Patten, M., *American Agricultural Villages*, Doubleday, Doran and Company, Inc., New York, 1927, p. 150

## QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

- 1 Are the differences in behavior between rural and urban people due to inherent or environmental differences? Discuss fully
- 2 Discuss the statement, "Farmers are not class-conscious and therefore cannot be a class"
- 3 Criticize the validity of listing as characteristics of farm people the traits mentioned in this chapter, and list other traits which are not mentioned
- 4 Do we think our way to action, or do we act our way to thinking?
- 5 What novels have you read which contain good psychological analyses of rural life? Explain fully why you consider these analyses good
- 6 Do you believe that superstitions are more prevalent among rural people than among others? Give reasons for your answer
- 7 What is the so-called "psychology of property ownership"?
- 8 Discuss the causes and effects of what may be called the "cultural lag" in rural life
- 9 Will farmers ultimately become "urban-minded"? Discuss fully

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## CHAPTER VIII

### THE RURAL STANDARD OF LIVING

#### WHAT A STANDARD OF LIVING IS

**Standard of Living Defined.**—As civilization advances, conditions of living change, continually seeking a so-called higher level. People accept this so-called higher level and consciously or unconsciously seek satisfaction and comfort without questioning whether the change is good or bad. In his own mind, every man has standards by which to measure his habits and opportunities of consuming goods and time and, by these same standards, the adequacy and satisfaction of his living, and this constitutes his standard of living.

By definition, standard of living may be one thing and standard of life another, but here we are attempting only to select some criteria by which we can measure the adequacy of farm life. We shall define standard of living as *those material things, those uses of time, and those satisfactions, which are a part of the habits of enough people to constitute a plane of living*.

The things which are necessary to make life measure up to the desired standard are necessities, comforts and luxuries. All of these, which are universally accepted as desirable, vary according to the standards of the age in which people live, the communities they live in, and their knowledge of how other people, particularly those in their own community, are living. There are two kinds of necessities: (1) those things which are essential for physical health and continued existence, and (2) those things which are created by convention, such as dress and conveyance. Comforts include not only those things which prevent or dispel physical pain and discomfort, but those which give social or psychic satisfaction. Luxuries, which are relative to one another and vary according to conventional necessities and psychic comforts, are for the purpose of enjoyment alone; their removal does not affect maintenance of life or imply physical pain. They con-

stitute real desires which people will strive to satisfy. Furthermore, people measure their success in life to a large degree in terms of their ability to satisfy these desires.

**The Units of Measurement for a Standard of Living.**—Measurements have been devised and established for practically everything man deals with, weights are measured by ounces, pounds and tons, distance, by inches, feet, yards and miles, market values and wealth, by money, and so on, in every walk of life. Can we devise or establish a criterion for adequate and efficient living? We know the amount of free air space necessary for a healthy working or living environment; we know the essential chemical constituents and caloric contents of foods. We can measure the level of intelligence and learning ability, we can measure human strain and fatigue, the reaction time of the senses, and we even go so far as to attempt to measure man's reactions to moral and artistic standards. Every social or economic situation has its particular standard of efficiency, and if we can bring together and correlate all of our vast knowledge of the physical and natural sciences, the social sciences and the arts, we will have criteria by which we can measure the processes and standard of living.

In order to make our discussion concrete, we shall measure the standard of living by a limited number of criteria, choosing the following as units of measurement: food, clothing, shelter, health, education, recreation, religion, and social contacts. Although these criteria are not all-inclusive, they do establish points for accurate comparison and standards of value of the most desirable things of life, and they will therefore make for a necessarily brief survey of rural life. All of these units of measurement are essential to a normal individual or community life, if any one of them is lacking, life tends to become abnormal, and if any one of them is not supplied in the quantity and quality which squares with the physical needs and social practices of others, life tends to become unhappy.

**Some General Considerations.**—Practically all studies of standards of living have been based upon the expenditure of money for consumption goods and economic and social services, for in the present-day economy the assumption is that all these goods and services are purchasable. But the mere expenditure of money cannot constitute an entirely satisfactory index to living,



a given amount of money, spent uneconomically and wastefully for goods and services, will do less to satisfy a given set of wants and desires than a smaller amount wisely expended—\$100,000 spent in a poker game does not equal \$1 00 expended for medical service for a sick child. The farmer has only recently come under the market and price regime, but since he still produces some of his consumption goods on his own farm, he is not yet living wholly under it. Therefore, any measurement of the market value of goods and services alone will fail to represent completely the actual rural standard of living. In addition, the way people spend their time in satisfying needs and desires, particularly desires, is as important as the way they spend their money.

The capacity to spend is for most people conditioned by the capacity to earn. The choice between harder work, greater earnings and a greater amount available for spending, and easier work with lower earnings and less money to spend, is as important as the choice between two alternative consumption goods. If, in order to earn sufficient money income for outlays for goods and services which will satisfy them, rural people must labor so hard and so long as to preclude their enjoyment of the goods and services thus purchased, it is highly doubtful whether their mere ability to spend money warrants calling their standard of living high. However, no detailed study has yet been made of the time element in either earning or enjoying goods and services, all we can do, therefore, is to call attention to the fact that since the social scheme of rural life is not cast in such a rigid division of labor and service as is that of urban life, the rural individual or family may very easily have a higher standard of living, even though the purchase of goods and services is lower than that necessary in the case of the urban individual or family.<sup>1</sup>

Notwithstanding the difference between the economic and social scheme of rural and urban life, the fact that the social and psychic standard of living desired by rural people is based upon the money needed to buy goods which can be purchased only in the market,<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Practically all studies of family standards of living have stopped with the economic evaluations of goods bought or produced on the farm, although some social participation studies make a valuable contribution to standard of living analysis. Some studies now being made at the North Carolina College of Agriculture are attempting to approach these problems from other angles.

<sup>2</sup> The term "market" is used here in a broad sense to include everything for which money is expended.

is becoming increasingly important. On no other basis can the farmer's mad desire for money income and wealth, even at the cost of almost unending fatigue, be explained. The comparison of the standards of expenditure of the rural family with those of urban families is consequently always present, both consciously and unconsciously, in the farmer's mind.

#### A BRIEF APPRAISAL OF THE RURAL STANDARD OF LIVING

How does the farm family's standard of living compare with the urban family's standard in terms of food, clothing, shelter (housing and housing facilities), health, education, recreation, religion, and social contacts? To measure American agriculture in these terms is more important to the farmer than to measure it in terms of the amount of land incorporated in the farm, the acreage under cultivation, the value of the crops and animals, or the number of people employed in agricultural pursuits.

**Food.**—Food is of importance as to its quantity and quality and the consumption habits of people. The American farm family apparently consumes more food than the American city family. Quantity alone, however, is not a reliable index to an adequate food standard, since it is possible for people to eat too much or too little. Moreover, farm people, who are almost universally outdoor manual laborers, require large quantities of food.

The quality of food used by farm families is for the most part good, particularly if the garden, orchard and cow contribute their share of it. Home demonstration agents have found that farm women must be taught that food, in addition to being fresh, has to contain adequate nutrition and vitamin content, that balanced diets and proper methods of cooking are essential to well-being. The farm woman's vaunted reputation for being a good cook is based for the most part on her ability to cook a wide variety of foods as her family has learned to like them. The food standards of farm families probably compare favorably with, or are even above, those of the city, the lack of food that results in the bread- and soup-lines characteristic of the city, is seldom found in the rural districts, although many farm tenants of the lower class and families which follow a pure cash cropping system "set a very meager table."

**Clothing.**—There are two aspects of the clothing problem, that of being adequately clad, and that of being well dressed—style.

Rural people, for the most part, are adequately clad for the lives they live and the work they do; freezing to death for lack of normal clothing is seldom heard of among country people, but it is by no means rare among the destitute of the city. In the winter, going frequently in and out, the farmer cannot—or does not—adapt his clothing to the sudden change in temperature, and because of the nature of his work he is often compelled to wear soiled clothes.

Although the differences in dress between the country man and townsman, so prevalent a generation ago, are not so common now, rural people probably do not measure up to urban people in stylishness. Country people wear work clothes most of the time, and the men's suits and the women's dresses are likely to go out of style before they are sufficiently worn to justify discarding them.

Country parents should be fully apprised of the subtle influence of dress on the personality development of young people, for children are often prevented from closely following the fashion by their parents' stern conservatism. Country children who feel they are queerly dressed when with others develop feelings and attitudes of inferiority which become firmly woven into their personalities, and their constant bitter rebellion results in serious personality scars, such as a permanent damage to self-respect. Thus the development of a dislike for the whole scheme of country life can often be traced to a seemingly trivial thing.

**Shelter.**—As will be pointed out more fully in the chapter on the farm residence (Chapter XIV), rural housing is one of the weakest spots in rural life. As a rule, in the city no one but a pauper or a miser lives in a poor and squalid house, but in the rural districts people are sometimes compelled to live in such houses, partly because there is a general lack of such conveniences as sewers, and water and lighting systems, and partly because the house, unlike other farm buildings, does not yield an economic income. The yard is often not beautified, and the house is poorly heated, lighted and ventilated. The rural house, with its poorly arranged rooms and meager conveniences, does not measure up to either scientific or urban housing standards in space, room arrangement, equipment or sanitation, such things as running water, sinks and labor-saving devices, which are a part of adequate housing equipment, being less prevalent in rural than in urban homes.

**Health.**—It is usually assumed that open-country life is more conducive to positive health and health opportunities than city life. However, we shall see (Chapter XVIII, Rural Health) that this assumption does not hold in the case of rural people, due to other qualifying factors. Sickness or "weakness" is often considered a disgrace by rural people, and many damaging superstitions still prevail regarding it. Farm work is hard and unrelenting, and must be carried on regardless of extreme weather exposure and excessive fatigue. Disease prevention, with its corollary, sanitary equipment, is not easily provided in rural districts, health facilities—doctors, nurses, drug stores, hospitals and clinics—are usually located a great distance from the farm. Thus it is apparent that the health advantages available to rural people do not compare with those enjoyed by urban people.

**Education.**—Education consists in learning to live, to work, and to earn in the world about us. The rural child learns one occupation by a very diligent apprenticeship, and he earns probably as much or more than the average city child. But in becoming acquainted with his world, he is handicapped by the lack of both school opportunities and outside contacts. His school equipment, the length of his school year, and his attendance are all below the standards of the city. The rural teacher is usually more poorly paid and less experienced than the average city teacher, and the country has fewer libraries, museums, zoological and botanical gardens, art galleries, and fewer periodicals and papers in the home, to supplement school training than the city does. The value of school property, and the amount expended for permanent equipment and current expenditures per school child are smaller in rural than in urban districts. The rural standard of living suffers in every way because of the lack of educational opportunity.

**Recreation.**—Adults in rural districts indulge in little play, for their work leaves them little time for it and, in addition, they often consider it foolish and even at times immoral. Rural children suffer as a result of this attitude, in that they have few opportunities for play, and the expenditure for play equipment and for individual amusement and recreation is low when compared with that in the city. The rural community does not provide for organized playgrounds or supervised play, and rural parents

do not provide the money necessary for participation in commercial recreational enterprises.

**Religion.**—The only way in which religion can be measured is in terms of churches, Sunday schools and other institutional equipment, of ministers' salaries, and opportunities offered for participation in institutional religious activities. We find in all these aspects and also in the frequency of organized religious programs that the rural community stands far below the urban. Semi-religious agencies, such as the Y. M. C. A., the Y. W. C. A., and the Salvation Army, concentrate their activities chiefly in cities. The lack of religious equipment and opportunity is as detrimental to the rural standard of living as the lack of educational equipment and opportunity.

**Social Contacts.**—Social contacts can be measured statistically only by the frequency of meeting other people, and in this also rural life falls far short of urban life. It offers few opportunities for institutional gatherings and volunteer social and business meetings, and for meeting people from families and communities other than their own. The isolation of the rural home and the necessary restriction of the farm enterprise rob the rural resident of any great opportunity for the extension of his social contacts.

**General Comparison of the Rural-Urban Standard of Living.**—When we compare rural with urban life on the basis of the elements of the standard of living—the units of measurement—we get a somewhat crude picture of the social and psychological setting of rural life. Regardless of whether the city has the right to set the standard of living, the fact remains that it does in the United States, and rural people, like all others in every age and every place, have and will continue to measure the satisfaction of their existence by a favorable comparison of their own criteria of living with those of other people they know or have heard of. Therefore the comparisons made here are neither strained nor theoretical, but rather constitute an attempt to assemble a set of factors in which will be included all the facilities of everyday life and by which can be measured the satisfaction which is present or lacking the people who have these facilities. If we list both rural and urban facilities and practices, we can to some degree visualize rural life in terms of the relative status of its standard of living. Thus, each of the units of measurement in Table 21

has been placed under the environment which offers it to best advantage

TABLE 21—COMPARISON OF URBAN AND RURAL STANDARDS OF LIVING

Rural Advantages	Urban Advantages
Food	Clothing (well dressed)
Clothing (well clad)	Shelter (housing and facilities)
Health (environment)	Health (facilities)
	Education
	Religion (institutional equipment, etc.)
	Recreation (time and equipment)
	Social contacts
Total Rural—3	Total Urban—7

**Some Studies of the Rural Standard of Living.**—No social aspect of rural life has been more thoroughly and scientifically studied than the standard of living of farm families, the first study of which was started about a century ago by Frédéric Le Play in his budgetary analyses.<sup>3</sup> His work constitutes what might be said to be the first piece of social research using a modern methodology. Some fifty or sixty years later, Ernst Engel, working with a study of Belgian working families and with a statistical analysis of the studies of the followers of Le Play, formulated four laws which might be termed the laws of the standard of living.<sup>4</sup> Before any serious study was attempted in the field of rural sociology, a number of urban industrial budgetary and standard of living studies of varying scope were made.<sup>5</sup> In 1920-1921, Carle C. Zimmerman, of North Carolina State College of Agriculture and Engineering, wrote his master's thesis, "The Rural Standard of Living," and at the same time E. L. Kirk-

<sup>3</sup> Le Play's *Les Ouvriers Européens* was published in 1855, he started his first study about 1830.

<sup>4</sup> Engel's *Die Lebenskosten Belgischer Arbeiter-Familien Hruher und Jetzt* was published in 1895. (Further reference will be made to Engel's laws later in this chapter.)

<sup>5</sup> A brief survey of early American studies can be found in Kirkpatrick, E. L., *The Farmer's Standard of Living*, The Century Company, New York, 1929, pp. 41-42, and a somewhat more detailed survey in Streightoff, F. H., *Standard of Living*, Houghton Mifflin Company, New York, 1911, and in Chapin, R. C., *Standard of Living*, Charities Publication Committee, New York, 1909.

patrick was working at Cornell University on a similar study for his doctor's dissertation, the latter's thesis being the first document published in this field in the United States.<sup>6</sup> Since this time, almost fifty specific studies of the farmer's standard of living have been made in practically every section of the United States, the data of some of which will be presented in this section, their interpretation being left, for the most part, for the following chapter.

Kirkpatrick brought together the data of a representative group of rural standard of living studies and published them in 1929.<sup>7</sup> Table 22, which is taken from his book, presents basic information from 38 studies for more than 10,000 farm families. From this table we may conclude that (1) the average farm family

TABLE 22—AVERAGE VALUE PER FAMILY AND PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF THE VALUE OF GOODS FURNISHED BY THE FARM FOR FAMILY LIVING PURPOSES DURING ONE YEAR<sup>8</sup>

	Num- ber	Date of Study, Year	Fam- ilies Stud- ied, Num- ber	Size of House- hold, Per- sons	All Goods Total Value, Dol- lars	Goods Furnished by the Farm for Family Living—Proportion of Total Value for		
						Food, Per Cent	Rent, Per Cent	Fuel, Per Cent
United States	11	1922-1924	2886	4.8	664	64.5	29.2	6.3
New England	4	1922-1924	317	4.7	656	53.4	31.1	15.5
South	3	1922-1924	1130	5.1	707	72.8	22.1	5.1
North Central	4	1922-1924	1439	4.6	671	59.9	34.7	5.4
New York State	1	1921	402	4.8	602	57.7	33.8	8.5
New York and Ohio	2	1924-1926	798	4.2	418	62.4	20.1	17.5
South	3	1919	861	4.7	537	71.5	25.7	2.8
United States	21	1918-1922	7738		518	61.8	35.5	2.7

bases its standard of living to a considerable extent on goods produced on the farm, and in this respect is different from the average city family, (2) food constitutes considerably more than one-half the value of other goods furnished by the farm, and (3) the other two items which the farm furnishes are rent and fuel.

<sup>6</sup> Kirkpatrick, E. L., "The Standard of Life in a Typical Section of Diversified Farming," *Bulletin 423*, Cornell University Agricultural Experiment Station, Ithaca, 1923.

<sup>7</sup> *The Farmer's Standard of Living*.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 54.

The proportional distribution of the family's total expenditures among the various elements which constitute the standard of living has been a basic component of every such study, from Engel's to those of the present time. The United States Bureau of Labor in 1901 made one of the first studies of this distribution to appear in this country, and the data from that study are given in Table 23 in order that they may be compared with similar data for farm families. However, in connection with the low figure given

TABLE 23.—AVERAGE EXPENDITURE OF 2567 FAMILIES HAVING AN AVERAGE INCOME OF \$827.19 FOR A FAMILY OF 5.31 PERSONS (1901)\*

Expenditure for	Average	Per Cent of Total Expenditure
Food	\$326.90	42.54
Rent	99.49	12.95
Fuel	32.23	4.19
Lighting	8.15	1.05
Clothing	107.84	14.05
Husband	\$ 33.73	
Wife	26.03	
Children	48.08	
	<u>\$107.84</u>	
Sundries	193.93	25.22
Total	<u>\$768.54</u>	<u>100.00</u>

Expenditure for Sundries in Detail	Average	Per Cent of Total Expenditure
Furniture and utensils	\$26.31	3.42
Insurance, life and property	20.97	2.73
Sickness and death	20.54	2.67
Liquor	12.44	1.62
Tobacco	10.93	1.42
Amusements and vacation	12.28	1.60
Mortgages and interest on home	12.13	1.58
Labor and other organization fees	9.05	1.17
Books and papers	8.35	1.09
Religious purposes	7.62	.99
Taxes	5.79	.75
Charity	2.39	.31
Other purposes	45.13	5.87

as "average income" in this table, it should be remembered that the difference in the price levels of 1901 and 1922-1924 would

\* *Eighteenth Annual Report of the United States Bureau of Labor*, Government Printing Office, Washington, D. C., 1901, p. 648



TABLE 24 —AVERAGE VALUE PER FAMILY AND THE DISTRIBUTION OF THE VALUE OF ALL GOODS USED DURING ONE YEAR<sup>10</sup>

Goods Used	2886 Farm Families of Selected Localities in 11 States 1922-1924										402 Farm Families of Livingston County, New York, 1921		798 Farm Families of Schoharie County, New York, and Jackson, Mingo and Vinton Counties, Ohio, 1924-1926	
	All Families, All States		317 Families, New England States		1130 Families, Southern States		1439 Families, North Central States							
	\$1598	\$1692	\$1551	\$1613	\$2012	\$1023								
Total Value	Dol- lars	Per Cent of Total	Dol- lars	Per Cent of Total	Dol- lars	Per Cent of Total	Dol- lars	Per Cent of Total	Dol- lars	Per Cent of Total	Dol- lars	Per Cent of Total	Dol- lars	Per Cent of Total
Food, including groceries	659	41 2	707	41 8	691	44 6	623	38 6	795	39 5	470	45 9		
Clothing	235	14 7	221	13 1	242	15 6	232	14 4	276	13 7	156	15 2		
Rent	200	12 5	204	12 0	156	10 1	233	14 4	234	11 6	84	8 2		
Furniture and furnishings	40	2 5	36	2 1	36	2 3	44	2 7	43	2 2	34	3 3		
Operation goods	213	13 3	255	15 1	194	12 5	219	13 6	317	15 8	154	15 1		
(Fuel)	(85)	(5 3)	(139)	(8 2)	(66)	(4 3)	(88)	(5 5)	(144)	(7 2)	(90)	(8 8)		
Maintenance of health	61	3 8	61	3 6	49	3 1	72	4 5	83	4 1	35	3 4		
Advancement goods	105	6 6	118	7 0	104	6 7	102	6 4	125	6 2	53	5 2		
Personal goods	41	2 6	51	3 0	37	2 4	42	2 6	48	2 4	19	1 9		
Insurance, life and health	41	2 6	36	2 1	39	2 5	44	2 7	79	3 9	15	1 5		
Unclassified	3	2	3	2	3	2	2	1	12	6	3	3		

<sup>10</sup> Kirkpatrick, E. L., *The Farmer's Standard of Living*, p. 62

more than double the average income of \$827.19, thus making it comparable with the figures for farm families given in Table 24.

Tables 23 and 24 are presented in order to give a clear view of what may be called a normal distribution of expenditures among the basic elements in the standard of living. Although the categories in these two tables are not identical, the following comparison is of interest.

<i>Per Cent Distribution for</i>	<i>Bureau of Labor Study</i>	<i>Farm Study</i>
Food	42 5	41 2
Rent	12 9	12 5
Clothing	14 05	14 7
Fuel	4 19	5 3
All others	26 36	26 3

Similar comparisons can be made between the items of health and insurance, although the remaining items are not comparable. But from those that are comparable, it is clear that the distribution of expenditures among the types of goods and services which enter into the maintenance of the standard of living of urban and rural families of medium incomes tends to be similar.

**Engel's Laws.**—Studies of the standard of living are sufficiently numerous to make it possible to know in a general way what happens to different types of expenditures when the total family budget changes, and Engel's four famous laws are generalizations of this type. As was previously stated, Ernst Engel in 1857 made a careful study of the family budgets of Belgian and Saxon working people, and of the findings reported in Le Play's "Family Monographs." From these he derived a schedule of the normal distribution of expenditures, carefully observing the effect of different family incomes on this distribution. His four laws are

1 *As the income of a family increased, a smaller percentage was expended for food*

2 *As the income of a family increased, the percentage of expenditure for clothing remained approximately the same*

3 *In all the incomes investigated, the percentage of expenditure for rent, fuel, and light invariably remained the same*

4 *As the income increased in amount, a constantly increasing percentage was expended for education, health, recreation, amusement, etc.*<sup>11</sup>

<sup>11</sup> For an account of Engel's study in English, see Chapin, R. C., *op cit.*, p. 11.

Although Engel's laws are stated in terms of increasing incomes, the exact reverse would be true in the case of decreasing incomes.

Streightoff modifies Engel's laws somewhat, his two most important modifications being: (1) The expenditures for fuel and light do not remain constant with increasing incomes, but decrease in relation to the increase in income, and (2) expenditures for cultural wants increase both absolutely and relatively with the increase in income<sup>12</sup>

The validity of the first and fourth laws for the average distribution of family incomes under the economic pressure of low incomes has been substantiated in every standard of living study made since Engel's, irrespective of whether the study was of urban or rural family budgets.

In the comparison between rural and urban expenditure of incomes we have seen that physical needs absorb a larger percentage of the rural than of the urban family budget; and the same holds true when low-income family budgets are compared with high-income family budgets. In a study of rural family budgets in Alabama, the average expenditure for food constituted 59.9 per cent of the entire budget when the income was below \$1000 per year, but only 31.9 per cent when the income was above \$3000 per year. In the \$1000-income group, 92.8 per cent of the entire income was expended for purely physical needs, excluding health, leaving only 7.2 per cent, or \$72, for health, cultural needs and wants, and savings. In the \$3000-income group, only 74.1 per cent was expended for physical needs, excluding health, leaving 25.9 per cent, or \$777, for health, cultural needs and wants, and savings.<sup>13</sup> This survey also showed that the percentage of the budget expended for clothing decreased relatively with a decreased income, that the proportion expended for rent, furnishings, health, and personal needs remained about constant for all incomes, although the actual money expenditure for these items was of course less in the lower-income group. Not only was the actual expenditure for the home and its furnishings less for the lower-income families, but the houses in which this group lived

<sup>12</sup> Streightoff, F. H., *op. cit.*, pp. 12-20.

<sup>13</sup> Kirkpatrick, E. L., *Living Conditions and the Cost of Living in Farm Homes of Selected Areas of Alabama* (a preliminary report), United States Department of Agriculture, Washington, D. C., July, 1924.

were generally smaller. Kirkpatrick corroborates these observations on the basis of a much larger collection of data <sup>14</sup>

The forces of physical needs and the customs of the area in which a given group of families lives are the only factors which tend to drive family expenditures into anything approaching laws of behavior. Physical needs vary with climate, etc., and customs vary from decade to decade and from section to section. A careful study of the data in Table 24 reveals striking similarities in the distribution of expenditures of farm families in the New England, Southern, and North Central states. However, there are some differences, and since the total average budgets are approximately the same, it can probably be assumed that these differences are due to the physical and cultural variations of the three sections. The following are the most striking differences: (1) Southern farm families expend a larger proportion of their budgets for both food and clothing, and a smaller proportion for rent, than do the families in the New England or North Central states. (2) New England farm families expend a larger proportion for food, and a smaller proportion for clothing and rent, than those of the North Central states. (3) The expenditure for fuel is much greater for New England farm families than for those of the North Central states, the southern families' expenditure for this item being considerably below that for the North Central section. (4) New England farm families expend a larger proportion of their budgets for personal goods than either of the other two groups. However, this may be due to the fact that theirs is the largest average total budget of the three groups.

In his "Study of North Carolina Farm Families,"<sup>15</sup> W. A. Anderson discovered the following two striking factors which had not hitherto been revealed in any other farm or city study: (1) Among farm owners the increases in income were absorbed by capital expenditures (additional land) or by the reduction of debts incurred on the land already owned, and (2) farm tenants expended increases in their income on the purchase and operation of automobiles. Both of these are cultural factors, but because no analysis similar to this has been made for other geographical

<sup>14</sup> Kirkpatrick, *The Farmer's Standard of Living*, pp. 42-45.

<sup>15</sup> Anderson, W. A., "Farm Family Living Among White Owner and Tenant Operators in Wake County, North Carolina," *Bulletin No. 269*, North Carolina Agricultural Experiment Station, Raleigh, September, 1929, pp. 45-46, 87-88.

areas, it cannot yet be determined whether these tendencies are general or confined to this particular area

#### THE RURAL STANDARD OF LIVING AND THE NATIONAL AGRICULTURAL POLICY

The significance of the farm family's standard of living has become sufficiently recognized to make it a topic of interest and concern to others than rural sociologists only. In his charge to the Commission on Country Life in 1908, President Roosevelt said, "The great rural interests are human interests, and good crops are of little value to the farmer unless they open the door to a good kind of life on the farm",<sup>16</sup> and in his introduction to its report in 1911, he wrote, "The strengthening of country life is the strengthening of the whole nation"<sup>17</sup>

In 1927, the American Country Life Association, which is in a way the successor of President Roosevelt's Country Life Commission, held a conference on "Farm Income and Farm Life" This conference attracted experts and leaders from every phase of agriculture—agricultural economists, rural sociologists, Cabinet officers, representatives of the Department of Agriculture and of colleges and universities, state officials, master farmers, county and home agents, representatives of volunteer rural agencies, officials of farm organizations, and hundreds of farm men and women.<sup>18</sup> In summarizing the high lights of the conference, A. R. Mann said, among other things:

This conference has made a useful contribution in interlocking the two aspects of its theme, the economic and social, farm income and farm life. Hitherto these have all too commonly been treated as separate things. In the conference book, in the addresses and the discussions, these two have merged into a common concept, the standard of life in the country and the means for its realization. I predict that there has been advanced here a singleness of objective, a wholeness in the conception of life, which will come in time to have marked influence on both economics and sociology as fields of inquiry, and in personal and community programs of action.

<sup>16</sup> *Report of the Commission on Country Life*, Sturgis & Walton Company, New York, 1911, p. 43

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 10

<sup>18</sup> Sanderson, Dwight, et al., *Farm Income and Farm Life, A Symposium on the Relation of the Social and Economic Factors in Rural Progress*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1927

There has been formulated, or at least given striking emphasis, what to the country as a whole is essentially a new, and for once adequate, definition of success in farming. Farming is a mode of life as well as an occupation.

It is a contribution to progress when we clarify our thinking by interpreting success in farming in terms of the standard of life sought and in the quality of life attained by the farm family, rather than merely by financial returns.

The Secretary of Agriculture expressed a similar idea when he urged that more attention must be paid to having farmers achieve a higher efficiency in consumption, to seek the highest standard of life possible on their incomes. He would provide education in consumption values as well as in production and marketing values. There must be developed an adequate technique on how to utilize incomes. One must first get an income; he must then consume it if he would keep it. It must be admitted that this is a reversal of the traditional emphasis. It has been customary to urge the necessity for larger income in order that the social and personal satisfactions may be acquired. There need be no fundamental conflict between the two modes of expression, but there is distinct value in now reversing the picture and setting out boldly that farmers really get only what they utilize, that their habits as consumers of economic and social goods need attention, and that they should demand higher standards of life as a groundwork for acquiring larger incomes.

The sociologist tells us that the human satisfactions which all persons seek are related to certain categories of their interests, namely, wealth, health, knowledge, beauty (or art), sociability, and righteousness. Progress for society is measured by an increased aggregate or juster proportion of these desirables or satisfactions for ever increasing numbers of the people. If we accept this general definition, may we not then harmonize our conceptions of farm income and farm life and of social justice into a single objective, and agree that agricultural progress is to be found in the process of achieving, on the part of people living on the farms, in ever greater amount and juster proportions, the higher levels of wealth, health, knowledge, beauty, sociability and righteousness which we as a people have set as worthy of our loftiest desires and higher efforts?<sup>19</sup>

In 1930 the Association's annual conference was on "The Rural Standard of Living," and the following quotation from a

<sup>19</sup> Mann, A. R., "An Interpretation of the Tenth National Country Life Conference," *Proceedings, Tenth and Eleventh Country Life Conferences*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1929, pp. 146-151.

summary of the conference gives something of a résumé of the discussion :

Upon one thing there has seemed to be unity of convictions in all discussions in all eight Forums, namely. That it is no longer particularly fruitful to argue about which is most important, the qualitative or quantitative measures of the rural standards of living. We have gone forward with the unconscious common consent that we are driving a two-horse team in our task of developing better rural standards of living. One horse is better and more adequate farm income. The other horse is the better way of rural life. The artists, poets and recreation specialists have made their contributions with a full recognition of the fact that physical labor and net farm income are mundane essentials if rural life is to avail itself of those things which are not indigenous to the soil and thus cannot be furnished by the farm itself. The farm economists, technical agriculturists and farm organization people have frankly assumed and asserted that a satisfying and adequate rural life is the ultimate goal of their endeavors, even though their day-by-day tasks bid them work upon scientific production and better farm income. One Forum discussion after another has seemed to assume without question that our task is to attack, directly, the elements, processes, technologies and techniques by which we, day by day, work and play and live in the open country and engage in the occupation and business of farming.

What I have said thus far has attempted to give the background and spirit of the discussions of this Conference. Now that I must come down to an attempt to summarize, somewhat in detail, the many discussions of the numerous Forums, I can do no more than list a few of the many challenging convictions and suggestions that have been presented at various places during this Conference. I make no pretense at listing all of them or of listing them in the order of their importance. All I shall do is to attempt to give a glimpse into the panorama of ideas, experiences, facts and convictions that have been presented or enacted here in the last three days.

The following is the list :

- 1 The steady deterioration of this nation's farm lands is a threat not only to rural standards of living but to national standards of living
- 2 Marginal lands, at various places throughout the nation, have developed marginal schools, marginal churches, marginal homes and tend to develop marginal people
3. It is impossible to have an adequate farm family standard of living without having an adequate farm family income

4 The ultimate goal of cooperative marketing is the development of the character of rural people

5 The farmer would rather work fourteen hours per day on the farm than to work eight hours per day in the factory, because of the difference in the setting and purposes of farm work and because of the general modes and tenor of country life [This statement was made by a farmer]

6 Farm machinery and household conveniences avail little if they lead only to the farming of more acres of land or to polishing the cook stove a little brighter, but do not lessen actual work and drudgery To be effective in terms of the rural standard of living, these new inventions and conveniences must bring leisure to farm people.

7 There is no inherent value in leisure if leisure time is not used in constructive and creative ways. To teach and learn these constructive and creative ways of life is a part of the processes of raising rural standards of living

8 To create a desire for a higher standard of living is as important as to invent ways of attaining a higher standard of living.

9 Community organizations and community programs are pieces of machinery by means of which rural needs can be met, personalities be developed, and elements of outside culture be introduced into rural life The community idea is not one of area, but the idea of a plan and a program for meeting the various and specific needs of people A rural community organization is like a radio receiving set in that it is a piece of machinery by means of which the numerous messages, broadcasted by hundreds of agencies seeking to serve agriculture, may be captured and heard by rural people

10 We should analyze our human and personal resources in rural life just as we do our so-called natural resources.

11 Rural people should be appraised of the best that is now being developed by rural people themselves in rural cultural arts The bringing and presenting to this Conference, of the best talent and creative art developed by the rural people of three states, in the meeting presided over by Mr A G Arvold, set standards for hundreds of people to carry back to their various rural communities

12 An analysis of the ability of rural communities to support rural institutions is as important as an analysis of the ability of farms to support farm families.

13 A practical program for both farm and home extension workers can be worked out on the basis of measuring their tasks and constructing their programs on the basis of the standards of adequacy in farm family standards of living. This is already being done in some places



14. What a different universe this would be if our senses were trained to hear and see the beauty that is around us!

15. The entrance of electricity into agriculture is an epochal event. In another generation the farm and farm home without electrical equipment will lose in both economic and social competition.

16. Urban labor has put its increased wages into living standards. Increased farm income has gone into added farm acres and increased land values. This means two very significant things, (a) that in the total farm set-up, the business of farming competes with the farm family standard of living, and (b) that rural people absorb the ups and downs of farm depression by taking their losses in their own standard of living.

17. We must ultimately solve the issues of rural well-being at the bottom by means of constructive programs of farming and farm life or solve them at the top by such economic and social revolutions as are taking place in Russia and elsewhere, or not solve them at all. It is the belief of some professional students of rural culture that no agrification has ever solved its problems of rural well-being. They assert that the agricultural share of all civilization ultimately falls into either peasantry or poverty. We believe that such a trend in American life can be obviated by working at the grass roots of our rural civilization.

18. There is no way of escaping the competition between the standards of living of the producers of all the world. National and international policies should be based upon a recognition of this fact.<sup>20</sup>

It is apparent from the rather long statements just quoted that the rural standard of living and the level of culture in American rural life are becoming matters of nation-wide, if not national, concern. We are gradually learning that the maintenance of an adequate and satisfying rural standard of living should be the chief objective of our national agricultural policy. Sooner or later we will recognize that it is both futile and foolish to expect rural life to develop satisfactorily without a clear consciousness on the part of all our citizens, both rural and urban, that something approaching a clearly stated national agricultural policy is a vital necessity.

#### QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Discuss the statement, "The standard of living of those who farm is the measure of the success or failure of any system of farming."
2. Does the expenditure of money by the farm family or the expenditure of

<sup>20</sup> Taylor, Carl C., "An Interpretation of the Conference," *Rural America*, vol. viii, no. 9, pp. 5-6.

time by the farm family constitute the more important measure of the rural standard of living?

- 3 If your family's income were permanently increased by \$2000 per year, which factor in your family's standard of living would you increase first? Second? Third? Which ones would you probably not increase at all?
- 4 In general, why is the rural standard of living lower in the Southern than in the North Central states?
- 5 Why does the rural standard of living lag behind the urban?
- 6 Why do Engel's laws work as they do? Explain in detail
- 7 Why has the rural standard of living been so long neglected as a matter of specific concern to agricultural leaders?
- 8 What do you understand by the statement, "The rural standard of living should be the objective of a national agricultural policy"?

SELECTED COLLATERAL SOURCE MATERIALS  
(See Chapter IX)

## CHAPTER IX

### THE RURAL STANDARD OF LIVING (*Continued*)

#### MAJOR FACTORS WHICH MODIFY THE RURAL STANDARD OF LIVING

**Tenancy as an Influence.**—There is almost always a difference between the standards of living of farm owners and farm tenants in the same area, in that the former maintain a higher standard than do the latter. However, this difference is not so marked in the north and middle west as in the south, where the great majority of tenants are croppers and not entrepreneurs. The standard of living as a whole is lower in the southern states than in other sections of the country, and the differentiation between that of farm owners and of croppers is more extreme in the cotton belt than elsewhere in this country. For example, Kirkpatrick found, in his Kentucky, Tennessee and Texas studies, that the value of goods and services consumed by 411 owner families was \$1635 per year, that of 321 tenant families, \$1378, and of 129 cropper families, \$947. The consumption of the tenant families, which were approximately 9 per cent larger than the owner families, was about 15 per cent less than that of the latter, and the consumption of the cropper families, which averaged about 12 per cent larger than the owner families, was about 40 per cent less. Furthermore, owner families obtained 38.6 per cent of their living from the farm, as compared to 36.6 per cent for tenants, and 33.6 per cent for croppers.<sup>1</sup>

There is a similar modification, in the case of tenant and cropper families, in the distribution of the family income between the different items. Tenants have to devote a larger proportion of their expenditures to physical necessities, and consequently a smaller proportion and a very much smaller absolute amount is left for health, advancement, savings and cultural wants. For

<sup>1</sup> Kirkpatrick, E. L., *Standards of Living*, published by the Extension Service of the College of Agriculture, The University of Wisconsin, and the American Country Life Association, University of Wisconsin, Madison, 1930, pp. 25-26.

example, owner families in Kentucky, Tennessee and Texas expended 17.2 per cent of their family budget for health, savings and cultural wants, as against 12.9 per cent for tenant, and 9.2 per cent for cropper, families. The lower percentages of the smaller budgets indicate a very small outlay of cash for anything but bare physical necessities. In Alabama, the expenditure per family for health, savings and cultural wants was shown to be only \$100.60 for tenants and \$61.70 for croppers, as against \$268.30 for owner families. In a survey of 1014 farm families in North Carolina, it was found that tenants lived in smaller houses, had a poorer education, gave less to churches, made less use of recreation and amusement facilities, and in every way had a lower standard of living than owners.<sup>2</sup> In a more recent study in the same state, W. A. Anderson says "The owners expended an average of \$1142 per family upon items for living purposes, as contrasted with \$532 for the tenant family. The owner spent more than twice as much as tenants for practically the same number of people. The money expenditure of the owners exceeded by two times those of the tenants for every general item except food and fuel and personal goods."<sup>3</sup> The following three tables on pages 184, 185, and 186 are taken from Anderson's study.

A careful study of these tables will convince the student of the validity of the principles and conclusions just stated. However, some variations from what may be called the general rule may be noted in the case of automobiles and personal items, and the significance of these variations will be discussed in the section of this chapter dealing with the psychological factors and cultural influences in the standard of living.

**The Standard of Living of Negro and White Farm Families of the Same Area.**—Although there are few statistical data, we do have wide observation to substantiate the contention that the presence of any large number of Negro families in a given farming area tends to lower the general standard of living of that area. The great majority of Negro farmers are in the south, and the southern rural standard of living is accordingly depressed by their low economic level. In the first place, colored and white

<sup>2</sup> Taylor, C. C., and Zimmerman, C. C., *Economic and Social Conditions of North Carolina Farmers*, North Carolina State College of Agriculture, Raleigh, 1922.

<sup>3</sup> Anderson, W. A., Doctor's Thesis.

TABLE 25—EXPENDITURES FOR THE VARIOUS ITEMS OF FARM FAMILY LIVING AMONG WHITE OWNERS AND WHITE TENANTS IN WAKE COUNTY, NORTH CAROLINA, 1926<sup>4</sup>

	Amount of Expenditure		Per Cent of Total Living Expenditures	
	Owners	Tenants	Owners	Tenants
Clothing	\$ 293	\$165	25.7	31.0
Food, fuel	165	135	14.4	25.4
Home and household	174	25	15.2	4.7
Health	82	31	7.2	5.8
Personal	44	42	3.8	7.9
Insurance	34	23	3.0	4.3
Church and charity	50	8	4.3	1.5
Education	58	3	5.1	.6
Reading	13	6	1.1	1.1
Recreation	10	3	.9	.6
Automobile	219	91	19.1	17.1
Totals	\$1142	\$532	100.0	100.0

farmers raise the same crops, which means that practically every white farmer is forced to compete with the Negro who, because of his lower standard of living and his ability to subsist on a lower financial income, tends to enforce his level of consumption on his white competitor. In the second place, Negroes furnish more than their share of tenants, croppers and hired men, and therefore fall in the lower income groups.

Kirkpatrick<sup>5</sup> presents the following data from studies made in Kentucky, Tennessee and Texas. The average annual value of goods and services consumed per family for 154 Negro families in 1920-1921 was only \$611. Although these families averaged .4 of a person more than the white families in the same area, their expenditures per family were less than one-half those of the white families, the latter averaging \$1436 per family. The items in the budgets of Negro families which suffered most severely because of the low income were housing, health and advancement goods. The Negroes were compelled to expend 53 per cent of their

<sup>4</sup> Anderson, W. A., "Farm Family Living Among White Owner and Tenant Operators in Wake County, North Carolina."

<sup>5</sup> Kirkpatrick, E. L., *Standards of Living*, pp. 21-22.

TABLE 26—RELATION OF INCOME TO PERCENTAGE OF DISTRIBUTION OF EXPENDITURES FOR FAMILY LIVING BY 294 WHITE OPERATORS IN WAKE COUNTY, NORTH CAROLINA, 1926<sup>4</sup>

Income Group	General Family Living			Family Advancement						Per-sonal	Auto-mobile	Total
	Cloth-ing	Food, Fuel	House-hold	Health	Insur-ance	Educa-tion	Read-ing	Church, Charity	Social Activi-ties			
\$ 1-499	32.4	29.7	4.3	7.5	3	3.5	1.1	4.2	5	3.5	13.4	100
500-999	28.3	20.5	16.7	8.3	2.3	2.8	1.1	3.7	5	4.7	11.2	100
1000-1499	29.1	17.7	17.3	9.1	2.2	1.4	1.4	4.7	7	3.9	12.2	100
1500-1999	22.7	13.9	28.9	6.8	2.5	1.0	1.0	3.7	5	3.1	16.3	100
2000-2499	32.9	15.3	12.6	6.0	4.5	3.4	1.6	4.6	1.1	4.6	23.0	100
2500-2999	19.3	10.4	9.0	4.2	1.1	1.4	7	5.2	5	1.9	21.8	100
3000-3499	24.4	13.0	12.3	6.1	8.4	3.8	1.0	4.4	1.1	4.5	21.0	100
3500-3999	30.2	17.0	9.5	17.2	2.5	4.9	1.0	4.7	5	2.9	9.7	100
4000-4499	31.2	10.7	9.8	4.0	2.4	1.1	1.0	4.8	4	3.9	30.8	100
4500-4999	33.2	16.1	13.6	4.4	2.2	1.7	6	2.9	19.2	5.7	19.2	100
5000-5499	24.7	11.1	8.5	6.1	3.0	8.9	3.0	4.4	1.3	4.1	24.8	100
5500-5999	23.8	18.5	4.9	6.2	6.8	6.8	1.3	4.8	1.1	4.3	32.1	100
6000-6499	29.1	10.3	10.9	6.0	1.8	12.9	1.9	4.0	3.1	5.9	8.2	100
6500-6999	17.3	20.3	5.6	3.8	2.5	3	1.1	7.6	1.5	4.4	34.6	100
7000 and above	16.5	7.6	8.2	6.2	3.5	7.5	5	3.5	1.0	3.5	26.1	100
Average	25.7	14.4	15.2	7.2	3.0	5.1	1.1	4.3	9	3.8	19.1	100

<sup>4</sup> Anderson, W. A., Table used in doctor's dissertation but not included in published document.

TABLE 27—RELATION OF INCOME TO PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF ALL LIVING EXPENDITURES FOR 300 WHITE TENANTS IN WAKE COUNTY, NORTH CAROLINA, 1926<sup>1</sup>

Income Group	General Family Living			Family Advancement					Auto- mobile	Per- sonal	Total
	Cloth- ing	Food, Fuel	House- hold	Health	Insur- ance	Educa- tion	Read- ing	Church, Charity	Social Activi- ties		
\$ 1-499	33.7	28.1	4.7	5.2	3.5		1.0	1.5	5	13.6	8.2
500-999	32.7	26.5	4.8	4.8	4.2		1.3	1.7	6	14.6	8.8
1000-1499	31.0	24.2	5.0	5.0	3.6	1.7	1.0	1.7	5	19.5	6.8
1500-1999	25.0	22.0	5.8	11.3	3.8		9	1.3	7	22.6	6.6
2000-2499	27.1	23.4	3.1	4.8	6		1.0	2.2	4	31.1	6.3
2500-2999	24.3	14.8	2.5	4.6	4.1		8	1.4	7	39.8	7.0
3000-3499	20.0	26.3	3.5	13.9	5.9		1.2	1.6	1	19.8	7.7
3500-3999	28.6	39.4	1.5	6.8	3.5		9	1.8	10	11.3	5.2
4000-4499											
4500-4999	41.1	33.4	3.6	7.3				2.2		7.7	4.7
5000-5499											
5500-5999											
6000-6499											
6500-6999											
7000 and above	23.5	13.0	4.0	10.9	13.1	24.3	8	1.0	1.0	6.4	2.0
Average	31.0	25.4	4.7	5.8	4.3	6	1.1	1.5	6	17.1	7.9

<sup>1</sup> Ibid.

total income for food, their annual expenditure per family for this item being \$304 less than that of the white families in the same section.

**The Standard of Living in Single-crop and Cash-crop Areas.**—There are now only two large sections of the United States which should be characterized as single-crop or cash-crop areas, the dry farming region and the cotton belt. However, such a characterization is only relative, for all modern farming is more or less commercial or cash farming. In the dry farming region the single crop is wheat, and in the cotton belt the predominant crop is of course cotton, although there are many others—tobacco, corn, peanuts, fruit and vegetables. Before considering the available data on the standards of living of these two sections, we can make the broad observation that in the whole world no group of single-crop farmers in an area of any size has ever had a high standard of living. A one-crop system necessitates a poor distribution of labor, for during the rush season it leaves little time for institutional activity, leisure or recreation, and during the slack season there is an abnormal amount of time for hunting and fishing, and for gossip at the crossroads store which often amounts to dissipation. Thus the maldistribution of labor inherent in the one-crop system makes for an abnormal life in the family, the church, the school, and in recreation groups. Furthermore, variations in economic prosperity are sharply marked in single-crop and cash-crop areas. The determination of almost every element in the standard of living is dependent upon the yield and market price of one commodity whereas, as we shall see later, a fair degree of stability is essential to a normal or satisfactory mode of life.

The dry farming region differs greatly from the cotton belt, for it is by force of circumstances an area of both isolation and cheap land. Its people and its institutions, therefore, have all the handicaps of isolation, in addition to those arising from the maldistribution of labor and the sharp economic variations of prosperity. However, the percentage of owner operators is high, for it is in some respects a frontier area to which prospective owners go. The land is cheap, the farms are large in size, the outlay for machinery is high, and the population is sparse. Gras gives the following description of the dry farming region.



On the whole, it is not a very hopeful spectacle that meets our gaze in the dry farming district, whether in America or in Canada. A shabby, often very wretched, house is located near the center of a large holding of several hundreds of acres of parched ground. The owner is hoping, still hoping after several years of disappointment, that this season he will get a good crop. His neighbor has already gone, leaving to his creditors stock and buildings as well as land. This situation is not found in all dry farming districts but it threatens to prevail in all during certain periods. So that some have thought that many of the dry farms should be thrown back into ranches, for which, they maintain, nature intended the land should be used.<sup>8</sup>

Farms in the cotton belt, on the other hand, are small, hand labor still prevails to a great extent, and the population is therefore relatively dense. The cotton belt covers sections which were formerly slave territory, and on which were large plantations; tenancy is prevalent and exerts its depressing influence on the rural standard of living.

As this is written, there is before the writer a newspaper headline, "Six Money Crop Counties Miss Living at Home by Wide Margin," with a subhead, "Fail by \$13,000,000 to raise enough food and feed for their use." The article itself concerns cotton and tobacco counties, and is based upon data carefully collected and tabulated by the Agricultural Extension Service of the North Carolina State College of Agriculture. Although these particular counties are by no means the worst ones in the cotton belt, the information about them is typical of a purely cash crop area.

The writer made a calculation of the cultural facilities and practices of farm families living in the nine states east of the Mississippi and south of Kentucky, excluding Florida, which is not predominantly either a tobacco or a cotton state; the results of his work appear in Table 28.

In some of the cotton and tobacco communities, especially those with a high rate of tenancy, 99 per cent of the land under cultivation in 1922 was planted to these two crops.<sup>9</sup> Comparisons made between those counties in southern states which produce cotton almost to the exclusion of other crops show that the cultural variations in these counties are sharply differentiated from those in other counties in the same states.

<sup>8</sup> Gras, N. S. B., *op. cit.*, pp. 342-343.

<sup>9</sup> Taylor, C. C., and Zimmerman, C. C., *op. cit.*, p. 11.

TABLE 28—COMPARISON OF CULTURAL INDICES OF COTTON-TOBACCO BELT WITH THOSE OF OTHER SECTIONS<sup>10</sup>

Area	Farm Wealth per Rural Inhab- itant, 1920	Income per Rural Inhab- itant, 1920	Autos on Farms per 1000 Rural In- habitants, 1920	Per Cent Illiteracy (Whites), 1920	Rural In- habitants per News- paper	Value of Goods Bought and Sold Coopera- tively, 1919	Household Conveniences per 1000 Farms, 1920		
							Tele- phones	Water Systems	Gas and Electric Lights
Cotton-Tobacco States	\$ 883	\$219	23 7	5 9	12 7	\$ 2 14	\$149 5	\$ 20 4	\$24 5
United States	2485	345	68 4	2 0	3 6	25 70	387 0	100 0	70 0
East North Central States*	5440	490	135 5	2 8		66 80	695 0	98 0	89 0

\* The East North Central section is used because it ranks the highest of all sections in the majority of items, although it is outranked in some items by other sections.

<sup>10</sup> From Taylor, Carl C., "The Influence of Cotton and Tobacco in Southern Civilization," a paper presented before the North Carolina State Conference of Social Service, July, 1925

**Other Factors Which Influence the Rural Standard of Living.**—The point has already been made that a rural standard of living cannot be measured entirely in terms of cash expenditure, but even if it could be, there are other factors which would influence the choice of expenditure. For example, a better house may be sacrificed in order to educate the children, or a greater expenditure for clothing or housing may be sacrificed to provide more wholesome and more elaborate recreation and amusement facilities and opportunities. Anderson found that farm tenants in North Carolina sacrificed even so-called physical necessities in order to purchase and operate automobiles.<sup>11</sup>

Rural people, like people everywhere, can and do modify their standards of living by choice of expenditures. There is always the possibility of a more economical expenditure for physical needs, and a consequent saving of money which can be spent for cultural needs. While the standard of living in a society so thoroughly dominated by a price system as ours is necessarily influenced by economic income, there is always the opportunity, except possibly in the most poverty-stricken families, for the modification of the mode of living by a conscious choice between possible satisfactions. In his study of income and expenditures as determinants in the rural standard of living, Anderson found that 52 per cent of the expenditures were based on purely budgetary factors.<sup>12</sup> Such a calculation is not absolute, but, taken as it is, it shows that a 48-per-cent determination is to be found in other than purely budgetary factors.

Owners spend seven times as much money for home and household goods as tenants and four times as large a proportion of the total expenditures for this purpose.

This analysis of the elements in family living of Wake County farmer owners and tenants indicates that a number of factors influence family living as represented by expenditures for these factors. The highest per cent determinations found are in the influence of the various factors upon the proportion that food and fuel, clothing, and the automobile are of the total budget. The factors largely responsible for the variations in the expenditures for each of these items in this study are gross cash income, proportion of the expenditures used for farm and investments, for food and fuel, for clothing, for automobile, and the size of the family. Each of these fac-

<sup>11</sup> Anderson, W. A., *Farm Family Living*, p. 49

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*

tors, except the size of the family, is a budgetary factor. It may be said, therefore, that budgetary influences are the major factors determining the amount of variations in the proportion of expenditures used for food and fuel, clothing and automobile to be found in this study. All the factors considered, however, both budgetary and otherwise, account for only 43 to 72 per cent of the factors determining expenditures for budgetary items. From 25 to 57 per cent of the factors are unaccounted for.<sup>13</sup>

The study of various factors influencing budgetary expenditures for family living indicates that many of the factors determining these expenditures are unaccounted for through budgetary analysis. The determination of the proportions of the expenditures used for the various items of the budget may be influenced by social and psychological factors, such as community facilities and institutions and habit. Further study is necessary, if farm family living in Wake County is to be more adequately explained, of the influence of these factors in the determination of the proportion of the expenditures used for the various elements of family living.<sup>14</sup>

A large factor with any given group of families is undoubtedly the institutional and agency facilities—schools, churches, recreation, health and other agencies—furnished by the community. If these institutions and agencies are absent or below par, then the standard of living of the families which depend on them for service will necessarily be below par.

#### THE RURAL STANDARD OF LIVING AS A CULTURE COMPLEX

**The Psychology of a Standard of Living.**—As has been seen, a standard of living is composed of the right quality and a sufficient quantity of the things which give satisfaction or enjoyment to those participating in it. Conversely, it is likely to give discontent and unhappiness to those who observe others enjoying it when it is not available to themselves. Farm people have been criticized for wanting to use goods which are a part of the consumption habits of higher-income city families, but this desire is only natural since they now come constantly in contact with city people and observe their modes of living. It is only by the desire created by such observation or by a conscious scheme of education

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 67

<sup>14</sup> Anderson, W. A., "Factors Influencing Living Conditions of White Owner and Tenant Farmers in Wake County," *Technical Bulletin No. 37*, North Carolina Agricultural Experiment Station, Raleigh, 1930, p. 58

that standards of living have ever been raised. The comforts and necessities of one class may be luxuries to another; but the constant contact between the two classes will tend to bring the two levels closer together or will drive the handicapped and restricted class to some form of rebellion. Sooner or later the luxuries of all classes who live in contact with one another must approach equality, or the discontent will be perpetual. Rural people are now a part of a larger community, and will therefore continue to strive for that larger community's standard of living.

But even though the standard of living always tends to rise because of the desire for emulation aroused by those who enjoy a more sumptuous life, it rises comparatively slowly, for it is a composite of life's consumption habits, and has tremendous inertia. This is why rural people who live in mountain districts and other isolated places are sometimes spoken of as our "contemporaneous ancestors"; only slightly influenced by contacts with the outside world, they tend to perpetuate their old habits and levels of living. The protest among farmers, even though steadily increasing, is slight when compared to that of the handicapped classes of the city who live day by day in the face of luxury standards of living.

Giving up a higher standard of living, once attained, is as slow a process as was the rise to that standard, for once a level of consumption and satisfactions is attained, it quickly becomes bound by custom. This explains in part the farmer protests which follow an even comparatively brief period of high price levels, for during these periods of prosperity farmers taste the new satisfactions and refuse to relinquish them in any following depression. In the attempt to maintain these newly established standards of living, farms are mortgaged, the drift to the city is augmented, and all kinds of farmer protest organizations arise. Although farmers may be wholly unconscious of the psychological factors which operate in their standard of living, these factors are always present, and no amount of ignorance or preaching about them will nullify them. These factors will always tend to raise the standard of living of those who are in contact with others whose standard is higher, and to keep it on accustomed levels, once these levels are attained.

**Culture Traits in the Farm Family Standard of Living.**—As was previously stated, a culture complex is composed of a

number of culture traits.<sup>15</sup> We have advanced no claim that the various items in the standard of living which are used as a scheme of budgetary analysis constitute all the traits in any culture complex, or even that they are identical with culture traits. In some cases, however, these items may be considered as specific traits within a total culture. Thus, the automobile, the type of house, the style of dress, the amount of reading, and even food habits may be considered as culture traits, and each of these may be influenced almost independently of other habits which people in that area may have. It is our purpose here to show that this is the case in some of these traits or habits and that, since this is true, there is a lag in rural culture at certain points and pronounced progress at others.

The influence of the automobile among farm tenants, as revealed in Anderson's study,<sup>16</sup> is the most startling trait or habit found in any of the studies of farm family standards of living. He found that 60 per cent of the tenant families included in his study owned automobiles, and that expenditures for their purchase and operation "represent 19.1 per cent of the owners' living budget, and 17.1 per cent of the tenants' living budget", and he makes this significant statement. "There can be no doubt that the utilization of such a large proportion of the budget by those who have a much smaller living budget than owners and who produce much less of their living on the farm than owners, lessens the quantity and quality of other consumption goods of the families."<sup>17</sup>

This is just another way of saying that the new trait, habit, or fashion of owning an automobile has become so impelling that farmers, like others, will drive cars even at the expense of the quantity and quality of some of the so-called necessities of life.

Similar behavior is found in clothing habits. Both Anderson and Kirkpatrick found that females from 19 to 24 years of age expend a greater amount of money for clothes than does any other member of the farm family, for it is at this period that fashions are most impelling, apparently to a greater degree among girls of marriageable age than among boys of the same age. Anderson's study shows that farm owners' daughters from 12 to

<sup>15</sup> Wissler, C., *op cit*, pp 1-49

<sup>16</sup> Anderson, W. A., *Farm Family Living*, pp 87-88

<sup>17</sup> Anderson, W. A., doctor's dissertation

14 years of age spend 97 per cent as much as their mothers on clothes, those from 15 to 18 years of age, 45 per cent more than their mothers, and from 19 to 24 years, 75 per cent more.<sup>18</sup> Kirkpatrick's studies show that farm wives expend annually an average of \$61.81 for clothes; farm daughters 15 to 18 years of age, \$82.06, and those 19 to 24 years of age, \$103.36. His data also show that daughters exceed farm wives in clothing expenditures first in "headwear" and next in "outer garments."<sup>19</sup>

Probably nothing more needs to be said to convince the student that certain strains or traits of culture penetrate rural districts more rapidly than others, and that therefore certain elements in the farm family's standard of living change more than others. Food habits, especially meal hours, are more stable as budgetary habits than is ownership of automobiles. Furthermore, if style or fashion or some dominating culture trait of a given period draws heavily on the family income, others must necessarily lag.

**Crop Area and Regional Cultural Complexes.**—There are undoubtedly differences between the culture of dairymen, of small-grain farmers, of horticulturists, and of others, and these differences probably could best be represented in terms of the differences in the various standards of living. However, it is not our purpose at this point to survey the cultures of all the regions or crop areas of the United States; for the following two reasons, we shall discuss only cotton culture as an illustration of the standard of living which is a product of a culture complex. (1) The cotton belt is more thoroughly a culture area, dominated by a major farm crop, than any other large section in this country, and (2) the influence of cotton culture is easily seen in the standard of living of the people in the cotton belt. The monuments which have been built to cotton culture are the homes, schools and churches, and other factors in the southern farmers' standard of living.

Anyone at all familiar with the south is aware of the dominating influence of cotton on both town and country life. Not only does its production set the annual routine of the farm family's work, but its market price determines the economic status of practically every business in the entire cotton belt. The production of

<sup>18</sup> Anderson, W. A., *Farm Family Living*, pp. 57-59.

<sup>19</sup> Kirkpatrick, E. L., *The Farmer's Standard of Living*, p. 115.

cotton is largely a farm tenant enterprise, and the system of financing the tenant is almost unique in American agriculture "In the cotton-growing areas in ten southern states in 1920, 55 out of every 100 farmers were tenants"<sup>20</sup> Probably no better description of the influence of cotton culture on the farm culture and the rural standard of living of the south can be given than by quoting excerpts from Vance's *Human Factors in Cotton Culture*:

There exists a kind of natural harmony about the cotton system. Its parts fit together so perfectly as to suggest the fatalism of design. Nature's harmony of the soil, the rainfall, the frostless season, the beaming sun, and a transplanted tropic plant fit well with a transplanted tropic race, landless white farmers, and the slow but all-surviving mule to supply the world's steady demand for a cheap fabric. The spinner, the cotton buyer, the landlord, the supply merchant, and the cotton farmer form an economic harmony that often benefits all except the producer, a complex whole that is so closely interconnected that no one can suggest any place at which it may be attacked except the grower; and the grower is to change the system himself, cold comfort for advice.<sup>21</sup>

*Among the most obvious of the material culture traits associated with cotton are the food habits of its growers.* It has been shown that the immense amount of man labor in planting, chopping, and picking cotton comes at times which interfere with the cultivation of other southern crops. Consequently, the family on the one-horse cotton farm has been *driven by compulsion to the most efficient of all the foodstuffs that can be made to suffice*.<sup>22</sup>

The southern rural attitudes toward the field labor of women and children to a great extent grow out of the seasonal demands of cotton.<sup>23</sup>

Cotton cultivation has become a social habit that can hardly be broken. An observer writes of the immigrant farmers in southern Oklahoma, "They have never cultivated anything but cotton, and do not want to raise anything else." When forced by price failures to the cultivation of other crops, the cotton farmer is prone to return at his first opportunity to cotton.<sup>24</sup>

The speculative nature of cotton production has carried over into

<sup>20</sup> Vance, R. B., *op. cit.*, p. 66.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 295.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 297 (Italics are mine—C. C. T.)

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 299.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 300.



the psychological equipment of the growers in another attitude, that of non-cooperation.<sup>25</sup>

The seasonal and cyclical nature of the money income not only serves to give the cotton grower a shifting standard of living, but also serves to prevent him from acquiring habits of thrift.<sup>26</sup>

Crude culture, poor taste in clothing and house furnishing, ill-chosen and ill-prepared diet, low ratios of expenditure for education, recreation, and reading are matters of contacts, training, and education. The standard of living is thus a culture complex.<sup>27</sup>

Every study which has been made, many of which have been quoted in this and other chapters, tends to show how a system of agriculture can become a system of culture. As such, it furnishes a large part of the explanation of the standard of living of the people who are a part of that culture.

#### IMPROVING THE RURAL STANDARD OF LIVING

**Better and More Efficient Farm Production.**—The universal and continual rise in standards of living from one generation to another is largely to be explained by society's ability to make better adaptations to and utilizations of nature. It is usually accepted as true that the standard of living may be improved by greater professional and occupational technique. The fruits of the development of new physical wealth usually accrue, partially at least, to those who initiate its development. There is no doubt that the standard of living is higher in areas where the land is fertile and farm production efficient than in the less fertile and less efficient sections. Some farmers in a given community profit and succeed, in comparison with their neighbors, because of their wiser choice of crops, better selection of breeds, and more careful methods of cultivation and harvesting. It is not apparent, however, that the tremendous emphasis placed on improved methods of agriculture by the United States Department of Agriculture, state departments of agriculture, and agricultural colleges, has always resulted in higher standards of living among rural people. "Making two blades of grass grow where one previously grew" has undoubtedly raised the standard of living of society as a whole; however, for farm families the rise has not been com-

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 304.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 305.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 313-314.

mensurate with that of other strata of society, and the result has been to leave some classes of our farm population with almost static standards of living.

**Better Business Methods.**—The task of business is to convert physical wealth into cash, thereby making it possible for people engaged in one specialized occupation to buy those goods and services produced and furnished by other specialized producing groups. In this day of the division of labor and of price and market systems, the possible standard of living of a family depends upon how much money its occupation or occupations can command. The lag in the rural standard of living can be explained to a great extent by the fact that farmers have not yet adjusted themselves to the commercial type of farming which business methods and criteria demand if any success is to follow. The first scientific approach to a higher standard of living is the wise organization of the farm enterprise, whereby the farmer can obtain the maximum use of his land, the best combination of crops, and the maximum labor uses for himself and his work animals, and to teach him this organization is the purpose of farm management. Actual as well as potential gains in this field of endeavor are little short of startling. Not only can a farmer thus assure himself a greater cash income, but he can greatly enhance his family's standard of living by the production of vegetables, fruits, dairy products, meat, poultry and eggs. This step is necessary in many farming sections, particularly the cash-crop and tenant-farming sections, before much can be done to improve the standard of living of those who live in these areas.

The second scientific approach to a higher standard of living lies in better marketing methods. Farm produce is grown in the fields, but the dividends are declared in the market places, in other words, farming is now largely a commercial enterprise and must therefore depend on commercial technique for success. Not only must farmers learn how to merchandise their produce, but they must also learn to produce those kinds and standards of goods which will satisfy the consuming public, with its critical buying mind and semi-luxury demands, in quantities which world markets can absorb at prices which will yield profit to the producers. This will mean the abandonment, to a great extent, of producing only those crops and other produce grown by generations of farmer predecessors in a given area.

**The Direct Teaching of Better Living Methods.**—The standard of living of any family is established in the main by two factors: (1) the physical wants arising from organic existence, and (2) the desires aroused and stimulated by social contacts and training. There is sufficient knowledge of physiology, medicine, dietetics, and similar sciences specifically concerned with the human body and organic processes to establish standards by which people can live efficiently. The combination of this various scientific knowledge ought to constitute a sound "economics of consumption," which in turn should be the chief lever with which to raise the rural standard of living. The application of the findings of these sciences to life should be the concern of those who seek to improve the conditions and habits which make for human efficiency and welfare. In rural districts this means the promotion of the work of the home economist, the dietitian, and the school and public health nurse; the introduction of home economics in the common school curricula, the use of every possible method to induce farm people to apply to the rearing of their children and the maintenance of their families the same scientific knowledge and care that they have rapidly adopted for their livestock, and, finally, an equal—and preferably greater—emphasis on the human side of agriculture than that now placed on the technical and commercial aspects of farming.

Attempts have recently been made to use a carefully worked-out family standard of living as the goal for agricultural and home economics work. This project is described by Madge J. Reese as follows:

Farm women or men and women in county and district conferences are setting up standards in the light of their own experience and the available data. The conclusions drawn and the standards suggested are the result of discussion in the several groups considering food and nutrition, clothing, home management and equipment, and the cost of farm living. The working of the cost-of-living budget for a family of five invokes considerable interest and discussion. The budget is based on a standard of comfortable, healthful, and efficient living, insuring a reasonable amount of culture and education.<sup>28</sup>

Miss Reese presents "farm-living budgets" set up by 13 con-

<sup>28</sup> Reese, Madge J., "Standard of Living as a Basis for an Agricultural Extension Program," *Extension Service Circular 143*, December, 1930, United States Department of Agriculture, Washington, D. C.

ferences held in 11 states. Some of these budgets are for counties, some for districts, and some for whole states, and the amounts required to support these budgets vary from \$1190 per farm family for the State of West Virginia to \$1733 per family for three counties in Utah. In reply to the possible criticism that many farm families cannot support such expensive budgets, Miss Reese says

No harm comes . . . as it is the farm women themselves who make up the budget . . . We have worked somewhat on the assumption that once small improvements are made, they are so appreciated that larger amounts of money are found somewhere for more extensive improvements. Experience is to the effect that this assumption is not a false one but is not altogether a dependable one. Is it not too much to say that the desire for home improvements alone will always stimulate the farm business to greater efficiency? Is it not more likely that the farm business will respond to its responsibility if it knows what and how much is expected of it? After a minimum for a desirable standard of living for a given area is set up, it is only a matter of good business that the extension economists and agricultural extension agents study the farms of the area and be able to suggest an organization of the farms which will yield, within a given period of time at least, the income sufficient for the desired standard of living. This is almost the same as saying that the desired standard of living should determine the use of the land. Why not?<sup>29</sup>

Winifred Stuart Gibbs shows that it is comparatively easy to improve the standard of living of a family without any increase in income, if direct instruction is given on health, housing, home conveniences, dietetics and clothing standards. She lists many cases of New York City families in which this was definitely accomplished within a period of one year,<sup>30</sup> and many similar accomplishments are recorded in the annual reports of the farm home demonstration agents in the various states.

No matter how great the economic income from the farm may be, there are many units in the rural standard of living which the

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid*. See also Brown, Frances L., Wells, Avid T., and Barnes, Flossie W., *An Economic Farm Home Survey of the Salt River Valley, Maricopa County, Arizona*, University of Arizona Agricultural Extension Service, Tucson, and *Farm Home Economic Conference, Grays Harbor County, Washington*, a report of suggestions and recommendations made at the Grays Harbor County Farm Home Economic Conference held at Montesano, Washington, May 21-22, 1930.

<sup>30</sup> Gibbs, Winifred S., *The Minimum Cost of Living*, The Macmillan Company, New York, 1917, pp. 49-93.

farm and farm home management are unable to supply. For example, community action and community institutions provide for such items as health, recreation, education, religion, and social contacts. This means that if farmers would raise their standard of living, they must be willing to pay higher taxes for schools, roads, hospitals and parks, and they must learn to cooperate in furnishing volunteer social services for their families and communities.

Both direct and indirect methods are of value in influencing personal habits. Direct methods present physical stimuli or develop aspirations and ambitions by means of social pressure and social standards—home, school, church, and other institutions. Indirect methods inculcate the tendency toward certain habits which the individual may unconsciously form. But habits can be expected to result only if the desired stimuli, ideals, aspirations and standards are emphasized. It is, therefore, almost futile to expect a satisfactory rural standard of living to result automatically from an overemphasis on either the technique of farming or farm management, there must also be a direct emphasis on the improvement of the farm family's consumption habits and on adequate standards for all their physical, social and cultural attainments—standards which must be instilled in the minds of rural people.

It is not definitely known how far the rural standard of living lags behind the urban, but we do know that the farm family is handicapped in its attainment of many of the factors of material culture, although in some of these factors, such as food, it has a distinct advantage. The writer is prejudiced enough in favor of rural life to believe that rural living standards can be made more adequate and satisfying than those of the great mass of city dwellers, for even if no increase in farm income is possible, rural standards of living can be raised if rural people can be inspired to develop all the latent possibilities in rural life. If, on the other hand, farm income can be increased, the standards will of necessity be raised, for the love for rural life will be developed, and at the same time higher cultural standards will be disseminated throughout the rural districts. According to Kirkpatrick:

The darker side of the farming picture is now subject to the danger of being painted too vividly in terms of labor income, farm income

or per cent of return on investment. These measures which were developed primarily as means of comparing the profitableness of farming in different localities, areas and regions were not meant to serve, and cannot be made to serve, as complete indexes of the satisfactions or values accruing from farming and farm life.

Most farm families find a wealth of satisfactions or values outside the realm of income, the rate of return on the investment or the "financial turnover" of the farm business. In fact, many if not most farm families obtain a large share of the values of life from sources not included in the goods, facilities and services of living. The sources of all satisfactions or values of life for the farm family are the tangible goods furnished by the farm for family living purposes, the financial returns from farming (cash or credit) entitling the farm family to draw upon the community's supply of consumption goods not available from individual family effort, and the intangible factors inherent in no other occupation as in farming. A well organized and operated farm is virtually a cooperative organization on a small scale; it involves the cooperation of all members of the family as does no other occupation or business. It creates a social and a business atmosphere which no other enterprise creates or permits. It causes a feeling of security of ownership which tends to develop a state of mind in harmony with an environment where individuals normally live at their best. These and other intangible factors bulk large in the satisfactions or values to be had from farming.

In regard to the families to whom the undesirable features and the discomforts loom larger than the satisfactions or values of farming and farm life, may the time soon come when our "programs for improving agriculture" will be of no more importance than our concern for the welfare of these families. Our first effort in this regard should be directed toward assisting these families to find more of the real satisfactions of farming and farm life.<sup>81</sup>

Although Anderson's study, previously cited, deals specifically with one locality, his analysis is sufficiently concrete to warrant ending our consideration of the rural standard of living with a summary of some of his conclusions.<sup>82</sup>

The real income of farm families is composed of the cash received from farm business, the food and fuel produced on the farm, and the use of the farm house as a residence.

"Families who own their farms used in Wake County, North Carolina, 48 per cent of their total expenditures for family living

<sup>81</sup> Kirkpatrick, E. L., *The Farmer's Standard of Living*, pp. 285-286

<sup>82</sup> Anderson, W. A., *Farm Family Income*, pp. 99-101

and the automobile, while tenants used 72.4 per cent for these items." This leads Dr. Anderson to conclude "that owners are not only engaged in earning a living, they are also building for the future, while tenants are engaged in making a living."<sup>83</sup>

A study is now being carried on at the North Carolina Agricultural Experiment Station to determine the measurable influence of community agencies and facilities on the standard of living of the farm families whose family budgets have already been studied. When this study is completed, some unmeasured and perhaps unmeasurable influential factors will still remain unaccounted for, among which will be the personal habits, the likes and dislikes, the ambitions and aspirations of the members of the families, and the traditions and customs of tastes and living which enhance life and which have been handed down from generation to generation in some families, but not in others.

### QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

- 1 Is the standard of living of the tenant families in your home community noticeably lower than that of the owner families? If so, in what way or ways?
2. What is meant by the statement, "The rural standard of living competes with land values and with city standards of living for the gains made in the proficiency of agriculture"?
- 3 Do all families with the same annual income have the same standards of living? Explain your answer fully.
4. What is meant by the statement, "The standard of living is a culture complex"?
- 5 Will corporation farming raise or lower the farm family standard of living in this country?
- 6 By what means can rural families raise their standards of living?
- 7 Name the farm families you know who have definitely raised their standards of living, and tell how this was accomplished in each case.

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*PART TWO*

RURAL SOCIAL INSTITUTIONS AND  
RURAL SOCIAL PROBLEMS



## CHAPTER X

### THE PROBLEM OF ISOLATION AND SOCIALIZATION IN RURAL LIFE

#### ISOLATION VERSUS SOCIALIZATION

**Isolation and Rural Life.**—As was stated in Chapter I, isolation is a part of, or a factor in, practically every rural problem, and, in a relative sense, it is probably as universal an index to rural life as any other one thing. The isolation of rural districts is in marked contrast to the congestion of cities, as shown by figures of population density. For example, in 1930, the population per square mile in Iowa was 44.5, and in Kansas, 23.0, it did not exceed 10 in North Dakota, Oregon, Montana, Idaho, Wyoming, Colorado, New Mexico, Arizona, Utah, and Nevada, being less than 1 per square mile in Nevada. These figures for the industrial states of Rhode Island and Massachusetts were 644 and 528, respectively,<sup>1</sup> and for New York City, 12,160. In certain blocks in the heart of that city the density reaches 933,120 per square mile, and there are single blocks into which are crowded as many people as live in one-third of the entire state of Arizona. These are, of course, extremes of isolation and congestion, and they are cited merely to emphasize the fact that, in comparison with the city, the country offers very few opportunities for contacts.

The general effects of social isolation and its opposite, socialization, are so well known that we need do little more than name them. Social evolution and progress, and the development of civilization can be stated in terms of increased human contacts, and this increase is dependent upon the means of communication and transportation, the vehicles of all forms of association. Human thinking itself has developed almost wholly through the use of language; human personality is developed through a multitude of contacts. Civilization has never developed—and it never can—

<sup>1</sup> *Fifteenth Census*, vol. 1, Population, p. 13

in isolation; it always follows in the paths of communication and transportation. Its location and expansion were for a long time dictated by the trade routes of the world. Rome never effectively expanded her power beyond the ends of her roads, England's merchant marine has given her her present status as a world power, the Berlin-to-Bagdad railroad was the basis of Germany's scheme for a Pan-German empire, the United States has achieved her present preeminent place by means of her railways and water routes—it is even possible that she would not now be a union if it were not for the development of this great network of transportation and communication facilities. These two factors are today as elemental to civilization as they ever were, and they are increasing in both number and variety. We take them so much for granted that we fail to recognize fully their functions and significance, but if we were deprived of them for only one day, we would indeed feel isolated. The chief motif in the story of the development of civilization from pioneer times to the present is the development of means of transportation and communication, and the story itself is the transforming of bleak isolation into a fair degree of socialization. No rural community of today is without some means of communication; but to the degree that one or many of the modern facilities of communication is lacking, to that degree is the community isolated, for isolation is not so much a matter of geography as of the absence of human contacts.

Roads, waterways, steam railroads, electric roads—street cars and interurbans—air routes, telegraphs, telephones, cables, wireless, radio, books, papers and magazines, business and personal correspondence, conversations, and every form of group association—all these are direct agencies of communication. There is not one of them which is not present to a greater extent in the city than in the country, although nearly every one is becoming more common in rural districts as time goes on. These increased facilities have, in fact, been the chief agencies for developing in the farmer a consciousness of his handicaps—both social and personality—and a desire for a greater participation in the culture of other groups. They have thrown him in contact with the outside world, and given him ideals of progress and desires which were unknown to him a few years ago. They have made him see the possibility of developing a real society or community in his own neighborhood by bringing into it a knowledge of, and con-

tact with, the rest of society; today his school, his home, his church, and everything he does or thinks are different because of his increased facilities for wider contacts

Isolation, the greatest handicap in farm life, is being dispelled at a rapid rate through these increased facilities. The inaccessibility of the average farm home to the community and even the outside world is to a great extent a thing of the past, and the out-of-the-way places in which these facilities are as yet unknown will be penetrated more quickly than anyone dreamed of a few years ago. These increased contacts will do more to help in the solution of all the rural social and economic problems than any other agency at work in rural life; for it is education, which is a matter of contacts, which makes farmers aware of these problems and indicates their solution.

Previous to the development of these means of communication, rural society was like a powerful giant who lacked the nervous system necessary to coordinate his activities and register his emotions. Now that this nervous system has been supplied, rural society and rural communities are not only coordinating their activity, but becoming highly conscious of their pains, pleasures and aspirations. Because few people realize how rapid this transformation has been, and fewer still appreciate its significance in the economic and social life of rural people and of the nation as a whole, this chapter will attempt both to present and to interpret the facts concerning the development and the present status of these means of communication and transportation.

### THE PROCESSES OF SOCIALIZATION

**Socialization Defined.**—Socialization has been described as the process by which the "we-consciousness" is developed. It is this, and more, for it is also the process by which "we" or group behavior is developed, that is, it is every process by which the individual weaves into his own behavior and attitudes what others do and think. Socialization commences the moment a person is born, and continues as long as he changes his own ways to conform to those of one group or of various groups. On the basis of this concept, it would of course be true to say that no individual is ever completely socialized, for no one can possibly adopt the life or participate in the ways of every other group. However, there is what might be called a normal set of gradients in socializa-

tion These gradients begin with family associations and end with the widest and most cosmopolitan experiences possible through education and travel They follow a geographical progression from home to neighborhood to school to community to state to nation and, finally, to the world. Their mental progression is from the utter ignorance of the new-born child to a knowledge of history, art, literature and science, and from the selfish physiological needs for food and shelter to ideals for the welfare of humanity as a whole. In all cases, barring physical abnormality, these gradients depend upon opportunities for contacts, and therefore, both in its causes and its effects, socialization is the opposite of isolation

In simple societies and, until comparatively recently in history, in all societies, social contacts were confined to primary or face-to-face group contacts, such as family, neighborhood, and local occupational groups Secondary or derivative contacts arose with the growth of transportation and communication, and have become widespread and dominant <sup>2</sup> These comprise all other than face-to-face contacts, such as those of municipalities, counties, states, nations, trade associations, scientific and professional societies, political parties, newspaper publics and, literally, a thousand others, and, through literature, art and science, they encompass people of past generations and of other races and nations The processes of socialization, therefore, include the means by which an individual becomes a participant in the life of any or all of these groups, as well as the means by which he becomes a normal member of his family or neighborhood.

Hawthorn has made a laudable and valuable attempt to measure socialization,<sup>3</sup> however, any such measurement obviously cannot be accurate, since it is impossible to determine how much of the world's culture and ideas one individual carries about with him. Hawthorn analyzes the community into agencies, activities, events, participations and exposures, and defines a social contact as "the exposure or contact of a person, for approximately one hour, to an event or situation which has definite socializing values." After reporting on his experiments with an "institu-

<sup>2</sup> See Bernard, L. L., *An Introduction to Social Psychology*, Henry Holt and Company, Inc., New York, 1926, chaps xxvi, xxvii.

<sup>3</sup> Hawthorn, H. B., *op. cit.*

tional," a "psychological," and a "volitional" scheme of classification, he makes the following statement regarding his "sociological scheme".

Under this system social contacts are rated as A, B, or C, depending upon their relation to the social development of the community or the individual. Thus, all events that had a pronounced educational, devotional, and inspirational influence, or that had a positive effect upon the upbuilding of community life would be classified as A type events. Most observers would agree that Chautauquas, institutes, study circles, sensible sermons, standard music, clean motion pictures, art exhibits, and quality home-talent plays would class as A, and that such contacts as would come from gossip clubs, inferior motion pictures, and other things of this character, would rank as B or C. Naturally, such a method is only a rough grouping, since certain events are difficult to class as A or B. Yet, it makes it possible to present a fair comparison of two communities as to the quality of their social and cultural life.

The use of this method of community analysis in Western Iowa communities indicated that there was a great variation between communities of about equal size, similar population, and like agriculture in their sociological "horsepower." Thus, according to rough calculations, Community 5 developed something like 62,000 social contacts annually of the A type, while Community 4 developed about 23,000 of the same type.<sup>4</sup>

We shall not attempt here to make any quantitative measurement of socialization but, instead, we shall discuss the agencies of socialization which have entered and greatly changed American rural life in the past century, and which are destined to bring about even further changes.

#### THE AGENCIES OF SOCIALIZATION

**Modes and Facilities of Transportation: The Railroad.**—Railroad development began in the United States in 1830, and this country's railroad mileage today is 37.5 per cent of that of the whole world. The tremendous influence on agriculture of the railroads which we take so much for granted can be seen if we contrast this country with Russia, China, India, Africa, or even sections of South America, where great potential agricultural areas are undeveloped economically or socially, or if we contrast

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 74.



the farmer in the middle west or far west of today with the farmer of fifty or seventy-five years ago. Without railroads, there is no reason to believe that we would be much more advanced agriculturally than Russia or South America, for agriculture would never have developed to any considerable extent in Iowa, Nebraska, the Dakotas and other states similarly located, had farmers been compelled to continue to haul their crops and drive their livestock anywhere from twenty-five to several hundred miles to market. Before the advent of railroads—even in what are now our greatest agricultural sections—farming for market disposal was restricted to a narrow strip on each side of great navigable rivers like the Mississippi, the Missouri and the Ohio. The very extensiveness of our country demanded railroad expansion as a preface to any great agricultural development, and the more outstanding effects on our agriculture of this expansion were as follows:

1 Agriculture became a business enterprise when it began producing for a market, and this in turn had a marked effect on society's conception of the status of the farmer. Previous to the time when the surplus production of certain farming areas could be marketed, the farmers of these areas were of little more than sentimental concern to society at large. Farming communities were isolated atoms of society, of little thought to others except as they were connected by blood relationship or friendship, or offered some possibility for future contacts. With the extension of the railroad into areas such as these, there arose the opportunity for the farmer to produce for profit, and society at large had the opportunity to benefit from the production of great food supplies. Thus there was created a market demand and market supply relationship which transformed an isolated, self-sufficient group of farmers into members of a great world enterprise.

2. The development of these immense productive areas into sources of market supply stabilized the world's food supply, because, for every potential food supply area that was tapped by a new line of transportation, there was a decrease in the possibility of the consuming public suffering because of the failure of one or another of the already established areas.

3 Markets, which were the direct result of the development in transportation, made possible a better and more flexible system of agricultural production, as is shown by the increased produc-

tion of perishable goods. Before the development of rapid transportation, effective refrigeration, and other similar modern facilities, men who wanted to farm for profit could do little to adapt production to profits, on the one hand, and, on the other, to location, climate, and soil conditions. Vegetable gardening was almost purely a household industry; without railroads, the poultry and egg industries, whose annual business is now over \$1,000,000,000 in this country, would have remained infant industries forever. The urban territory in which milk can be marketed has been extended from the distance of a team's haul to one of 500 miles, in the case of great cities. Commercial fruit growing is a product of the last century, and the California fruit industry is a direct result of the development of transcontinental railroads. The great vegetable and fruit industries of today are the best examples of the effect of the development in transportation facilities.

4 The rural standard of living began to rise when the farmer began to sell in world markets, for self-sufficient isolated farming never provided more than a crude existence, whereas farmers are now able to get goods from other sections of the nation and the world.

5 Our great system of railway transportation has aided our national unity and greatness, for railroads have made it possible to center our government in one place, and to organize our economic life around certain great centers of trade and commerce. We are great because we are great agriculturally—our heavy exports have developed from our surplus agricultural production—and we could not be great agriculturally without an outlet to the markets of the world.

**The Interurban and Rural Electric Line.**—It is impossible for anyone who was not living in a rural community in which automobiles were unthought of but in which there was the possibility of the installation of an electric car line, to realize the vision created by this possibility. Even now, at times, the author, twenty-five years removed from such a situation, dreams of riding from the old farm to the nearby village on one of these wonderfully rapid and accommodating electric lines. Although the impressions made by such anticipation are now only the stuff for reflective dreams, they might have been prophecies of realities had it not been for the automobile.

The automobile followed so close on the heels of the development of rural electrical transportation systems that we have failed to grasp the latter's significance to rural communities. Neither the United States census nor electrical traction companies classify rural and urban electrical mileage separately, and it is therefore impossible to ascertain their direct service to the people in the rural districts. The primary function of many electrical rail lines is to provide rapid transit from one town to another, but others are not interurban at all, their terminals lying in the rural districts themselves. Certain sections of New England are a regular "string town," ranged for miles along the car tracks, and this form of development is just a suggestion of what might have been expected in other sections had it not been for the advent of the automobile. Vegetables, fruits, and other produce are marketed daily by way of these lines, and shopping in the village is made easy. Express packages, parcel post and mail are delivered from these lines, and regular milk cars are run at certain times during the day. Rural people go to church on the electric cars—in short, these cars are used for practically every conceivable transportation service needed by rural people.

**The Automobile.**—There are today more than 25,000,000 automobiles in this country, and it is a mistake to assume that farmers do not constitute a considerable proportion of their owners, for in 1924, according to E. R. Eastman, about one-fourth of the automobiles and trucks were owned by farmers.<sup>5</sup> The automobile is today one of the chief agencies of transportation and communication in rural districts. It is the means of attendance at community gatherings of all kinds, frequent trips to town and other visiting, and its coming has increased the number of these occasions. The county fair and the Chautauqua are seas of automobiles, and a Saturday night in a county seat in Iowa sees a thousand parked for blocks around the town square. In prosperous rural sections, driving a horse on a pleasure trip is practically a thing of the past, and the old-fashioned "hitching racks" are now forbidden by city ordinance. A ratio of 50 automobiles to one horse-driven vehicle is common in church gatherings in thousands of rural communities today.

In many communities the motor truck has become the most

<sup>5</sup> Eastman, E. R., *These Changing Times*, The Macmillan Company, New York, 1927, p. 10.

practical means of taking farm produce to the market, for it shortens the time necessary for delivery to the market—a fact of great significance in marketing fruits and vegetables—and in addition saves the horses, which are often not well suited for road hauling, for field work. The motor truck makes it possible for the farmer to choose between markets, a thing impossible for him when he had to depend on a slower means of transportation. For example, a survey of 831 corn-belt farmers who used motor trucks showed that a little more than one-fourth of them had recently changed their market centers, the owners of these trucks calculated that they were used in field or road work 112 days per year and traveled an average of 2777 miles during the year. F. W. Fenn, secretary of the National Motor Truck Committee of the National Automobile Chamber of Commerce, stated in the *Breeders' Gazette* in August, 1921, that during the preceding year 6,000,000 cattle, hogs and sheep were shipped directly from the farm to such central markets as St. Louis, Omaha, St. Joseph and Chicago, without rail transportation. This is vastly different from the day when hundreds of thousands of cattle were driven on foot—sometimes hundreds of miles from the Texas ranges—to the central markets.

The Bureau of Agricultural Economics of the United States Department of Agriculture made the following estimate from data gathered in 1929, based on from 150,000 to 200,000 carloads for the year throughout the nation. In Connecticut, 92 per cent of the fruits and vegetables traveling up to 20 miles to market were hauled in motor trucks, 73 per cent was thus shipped in southwestern Michigan, 41 per cent in southern Indiana, and 21 per cent in southern Illinois.<sup>6</sup>

The use of the automobile depends on good roads and is therefore conditioned by one of the other agencies of communication which will be discussed subsequently; and it in turn conditions many of the other factors and agencies in rural districts. Its influence may be summarized as follows:

- 1 It is the chief stimulus to road building and improvement
- 2 It connects the country and the town and makes of them an integral community
- 3 It enlarges the community, and in doing so it is slowly elimi-

<sup>6</sup> United States Department of Agriculture, Office Information Press Service, Washington, D. C., Release November 4, 1931

nating many of the smaller social and business centers of the more isolated sections.

4. It makes possible business and social gatherings and makes all rural affairs more "up-to-date." Entertainments need no longer be stereotyped and simple and depend solely on local talent, furthermore, the automobile and good roads assure an audience, for less energy is needed to attend such occasions because of the ease and speed of travel by this means.

5. It gives the farmer a different social status. The fact that he can own a powerful, beautiful and high-priced automobile gives him and his family a standing in the eyes of the town people which he could never attain previous to the automobile era. However, slight caste distinctions may be created by the presence of a few people in rural communities who cannot afford automobiles.

**Country Roads.**—Public roads are our greatest and most indispensable lines of transportation and communication. In addition to being the very framework of rural organization in every rural community, they have a profound national significance. The extent of an empire in ancient times was determined by the farthest reach of its roads; and today, although road building may not be undertaken for the extension of the frontiers of an empire, it is nevertheless essential to the internal economic and social development of every nation. Our highways should be woven into a national transportation system and correlated with our railroads, waterways and electric lines, so as to constitute the very foundation of our social organization. There are in this country approximately 3,000,000 miles of highways of all kinds, as against a railroad mileage less than one-tenth of this amount. Probably 25 per cent of all the traffic carried by our railroads also passes over wagon and automobile roads, and the percentage of freight which passes over country roads and is not shipped by rail is probably greater than the total amount of railroad freight. The passenger traffic on country roads is many times greater than that on railroads.

The United States Department of Agriculture estimated that in 1912 it cost \$72,948,000 to move our twelve principal agricultural crops from the country to their respective shipping points. The railroad freight traffic from shipping points in the country is bound to vary in direct ratio to bad road conditions in that particular district, and this variation reaches a 50-per-cent slump at

country stations at times when roads are in bad shape. Such facts are significant to the consuming public which depends on these raw materials from the farm, to the railroads, and to the farmer. Everyone knows that increased freight rates mean an increase in the cost of consumers' goods because of (1) the actual freight cost, and (2) the fact that many goods are not shipped to markets because of the high cost of transportation. Unhappily, we have been slow to recognize that these factors operate just as directly in relation to country roads as to railroads or city deliveries.

It was estimated in 1906 that the shipping cost per ton-mile on country roads in this country was 22 7 cents; this cost increased to 60 cents per ton-mile on a dry-sand road, and dropped to 8 cents on a broken-rock road. The average country haul was found at that time to be 9 4 miles, and thus the average cost per ton for delivery of country products to shipping points was \$2 13.<sup>7</sup>

Slowly but surely we have recognized the national significance of such facts as these. In 1895 Congress made the first federal appropriation of \$10,000 to enable the Department of Agriculture to investigate road conditions throughout this country, at the present time the United States is spending more than \$100,000,000 annually to aid states and counties in road building and road administration work, and state and local governments are probably expending twenty times this amount. The hard-surfaced roads in this country, estimated in 1928 to be 625,000 miles in length, would encircle the globe twenty-five times.<sup>8</sup> The public road, which has always been more generally used than any other means of transportation and communication, has at last acquired an economic and social status throughout this country, and the further developments to be expected during the next few years are beyond prophecy.

Of more immediate significance to our present study is the effect of road improvement on the people who live on the farms; and the enumeration of the chief benefits of such improvement will serve to make this apparent.

<sup>7</sup> *Farmers' Bulletin No. 505*, United States Department of Agriculture, Washington, D. C.

<sup>8</sup> *Facts and Figures of the Automobile Industry*, National Automobile Chamber of Commerce, United States Department of Agriculture, New York City, 1929, p. 38.

1. Good roads increase land values. A government survey of typical counties in Virginia, New York, Alabama, Mississippi, and Florida showed that the actual selling value of farm lands adjacent to improved roads increased from 25 to 194 per cent, and the average was said to be \$9.00 per acre. The difference in value per acre would probably be much greater on higher-priced lands. The appraisal value of lands of equal productive capacity and equal degree of improvement is always in a direct ratio to their proximity to centers of population. A hard-surfaced road reduces the time and energy needed in traveling or hauling to and from the population center, which is usually a shipping point, and this has the same effect as moving a farm that much closer to town.

2 Good roads decrease the transportation cost to and from the farm. It has already been noted that the cost of transportation is 52 cents lower over a broken-rock road than over a sand road. This means that it will cost the farmer no more to haul one ton 5 7 miles over a broken-rock road than to haul the same load 2 miles over a common dirt road, in other words, he can haul a load almost three times as heavy over a broken-rock road for the same cost. Tests have been made on various kinds of road surfaces. The figures in Table 29 are based on a one-horse load

TABLE 29—ROAD TESTS OVER ROAD SURFACES OF VARIOUS KINDS\*

Kind of Road	Number of Pounds
Muddy earth road	0- 800
Smooth dry earth road	1000-2000
Gravel road (bad condition)	1000-1500
Gravel road (good condition)	1000-3300
Macadam road	2000-5000
Brick road	5000-8000

Thus it is apparent that in one day, if the speed is the same on both roads, a horse can haul from two and one-half to six times as much over a macadam as over a moderately muddy road. Of course, if the dirt roads are excessively muddy, hauling is altogether impossible, whereas the condition of hard-surfaced roads is comparatively constant.

More recent studies have made possible the further calculation of the saving in transportation costs due to improved roads. From

\* *Farmers' Bulletin No. 305.*

TABLE 30.—COSTS PER MILE FOR CARS IN RENTAL SERVICE WITHOUT DRIVERS<sup>10</sup>

Kind of Car	Cost per Mile	
	Earth Roads	Concrete
Ford touring .	\$0 093	\$0 069
Ford coupé	0 094	0 070
Ford sedan	0 095	0 072
Dodge touring	0 115	0 091

the data in Table 30, taken from one of these studies, it is seen that the actual cost of running an automobile is lowered between 18 and 26 per cent when a dirt road is surfaced with concrete, and an even more startling picture is presented in the following statement:

Figuring, as a minimum, that the 500,000,000 cars (from North Carolina and other states) using the State's concrete highways average 500 miles a month thereon, we have a total mileage of 250,000,000 running miles, or 3,000,000,000 miles in a year. Using figures of the report of the Engineering Experiment Station, the saving in all costs per car is \$0 033 per mile, and we attain the stupendous saving to motorists of \$99,000,000 per annum on the operation of automobiles on North Carolina's concrete roads over the cost of equal operation if made on second-class roads prevalent in some states<sup>11</sup>

3 Good roads are of advantage in marketing, for the farmer can market his produce at any time during the year and thus can take advantage of market conditions. There is a further benefit, for he can plan his marketing in relation to his other farm work

4. Good roads improve rural delivery service, for they make possible delivery by automobile rather than by a horse-drawn vehicle. This means that mail can be delivered more promptly, mail routes can be lengthened, and thus more people can be served in the same length of time. The merchants in some sections have developed a rural delivery service which delivers groceries and

<sup>10</sup> Ogg, T. R., and Carter, H. S., "Highway Transportation Costs," *Bulletin* 69, Engineering Experiment Station, Iowa State College, Ames, July, 1924, p. 17

<sup>11</sup> "Analysis of North Carolina Taxes and Debts," bulletin issued by North Carolina Department of Conservation and Development, Raleigh, 1927



picks up country produce. All forms of rural delivery service can be stabilized and more widely extended if the right kind of road surfaces is provided

5. Good roads increase the possibilities for rural community life. Farm organizations, clubs, parties and institutes, and religious, social and recreational activities are attempted more frequently and are more successful if the roads can be depended upon. There is probably nothing which so handicaps community assembly programs, makes attendance so precarious, and often makes them absolutely impossible when the farmer has most leisure, than bad country roads.

6. Good roads improve school systems. Surveys of similar communities in Alabama, New York and Michigan show that school attendance is increased 15 per cent because of good roads. Getting children to and from school is probably the greatest stumbling block in consolidation, and good roads make this easy. A comparison of the average rural school attendance of the ten states with the greatest percentage of improved highways, with that of the ten lowest in this respect, shows that the attendance is almost exactly 5 per cent higher in the former.

7. Good roads make the automobile and truck both possible and profitable for farm use. If by means of hard-surfaced roads these vehicles can be used for the regular road travel and for hauling at all times of the year, they become necessities, not luxuries, for their operation is just as economical as that of the horses they replace.

8. Good roads make available prompt medical and veterinary service for the farm. Practically all the physicians and veterinarians are located in towns or cities; and good roads, in conjunction with the telephone, bring medical assistance to the rural home in from one-quarter to one-eighth the time required when the farmer had to hitch up and drive a slow farm team to town, possibly over a muddy road, to get the doctor. The difference between thirty minutes and from two to four hours in getting aid is of great importance in the case of critical illness. Furthermore, doctors and veterinarians are more likely to be called in case of illness if these ready means of communication and transportation are available.

9. Good roads eliminate the almost complete isolation of the farm family during the winter and other seasons when dirt roads

are in bad condition. Farm people can thus keep up their contacts not only with their neighbors but also with the outside world, and since such contacts become habits, the importance of keeping them active throughout the entire year is of double significance.

10 Good roads enlarge the neighborhood. Travel in an automobile is about four times as fast as in a horse-drawn vehicle, and a sixteen-mile automobile trip over a hard-surfaced road is easier than a four-mile trip with a horse-drawn vehicle over a dirt road. This means that, as far as time and the possibility of meeting other people are concerned, the neighborhood is sixteen times larger than its actual size, that is, the area served by a center with a radius of sixteen miles in every direction is sixteen times as large as the one with a radius of only four miles.

11 Good roads facilitate an immediate and constant contact with the outside world which is of the deepest significance. The rural mail delivery which brings newspapers and letters from other communities, the habitual contacts with neighbors and townspeople, the increase in community and neighborhood assemblies, the rural church and Sunday school with all-year programs, the consolidation of schools and the better school attendance—all these serve in an immeasurable degree to raise the level of rural life. The farmer's children are educated; his class is socialized, his neighborhood, state and nation feel his influence as a citizen. Slowly, but surely, all society must benefit from his participation in cosmopolitan life, and the arteries of transportation and communication are the key to his development for this rôle.

**Means of Communication: The Rural Free Delivery.**—The rural free delivery is one of the most helpful services ever undertaken in the country; its expansion has been great, and its influence immeasurable. On June 9, 1896, Congress appropriated \$40,000 to make possible the establishment of three experimental routes in West Virginia. Although Table 31 is not complete because some of the data have never been compiled, it indicates clearly the expansion of the rural free delivery. The incompleteness of this table makes it impossible to draw accurate statistical conclusions regarding the total expansion and influence of this service. However, over three-fifths of this country's total road mileage is covered by rural mail routes, and the patrons served constitute three-fifths or more of the total open-country popula-

TABLE 31.—DEVELOPMENT OF RURAL FREE DELIVERY IN THE UNITED STATES<sup>13</sup>

Fiscal Year	Routes	Mileage	Number of Patrons	Pieces of Mail Carried
1897.	82	not available	not available	not available
1902	1,259	not available	not available	not available
1910	41,097	993,068	not available	2,723,262,000
1915	43,866	1,076,235	25,433,537	3,657,530,038
1920	43,445	1,151,832	29,891,159	3,915,888,854
1929	44,039	1,316,420	24,736,504	3,532,346,344

tion. The outstanding social and economic effects of the rural free delivery are probably:

1. It has made possible an immediate and continuous knowledge of world events, since through this service daily newspapers, the chief vehicle of such knowledge, are delivered to farm homes. In 1929 the rural free delivery handled 1,800,000 pieces of second-class mail, in which belong newspapers and other periodicals. A deep appreciation of its significance as a dispenser of knowledge can be gained by contrasting the rural attitude, interest, and efficiency during the World War with what would have been the case had these rural districts been without any means of knowing what was occurring.

2. Before the day of the telephone and radio, it furnished daily weather and market reports. However, this function is decreasing in importance, because of the almost universal radio and the wide circulation of daily papers.

3. Because of the ease of communication by mail, it serves to keep alive many contacts which would otherwise be lost. Friends and relatives who are separated find it much easier to maintain contacts when correspondence facilities are good. Although there is no information regarding the percentage of personal correspondence in the increase in the mail handled, the rural mail service handled 1,530,624 pieces of first-class mail during 1929.<sup>14</sup>

4. It furnishes parcel post facilities, and consequently a merchandising agency for the farmer. In 1929 the rural mail service

<sup>13</sup> Information furnished by the Fourth Assistant Postmaster General of the United States, and from *Annual Report of the Postmaster General*, fiscal year ending June 30, 1929, Government Printing Office, Washington, D. C.

<sup>14</sup> *Annual Report of the Postmaster General*, 1929, pp. 134-135.

handled 5,448,305 C.O.D. orders and, in addition, 2,937,734 registered and 5,026,426 insured pieces of mail, a large part of these two latter probably representing some kind of merchandise. The farmer can have numerous small articles delivered to his mail box from town or from more distant mail-order houses, and his telephoned orders for medicine and drugs can be delivered by mail. In addition, some interesting marketing operations have been undertaken by the rural free delivery, for it delivers eggs, butter, fruit and other small items of farm produce to nearby towns, fruit is often shipped long distances. This form of service has probably just begun its development, for when the hard-surfaced road becomes universal, light trucks will probably provide a daily and stupendous parcel post service to and from the rural districts.

5 It has been an agency for road improvement, for road conditions are of vital importance in the establishment of this service in any community. Our government has undoubtedly been extremely lenient in enforcing its regulations concerning passable roads. The rural mail carrier, however, is a constant advocate of road improvement; furthermore, there is no question but that the rural free delivery does operate in communities where the roads are good, and that the farmers or the communities which refuse to cooperate in good roads movements are the ones least accommodated by this service.

**The Rural Telephone.**—Just when the first rural telephone line was installed is impossible to state, but it is substantially correct to say that the entire service, whose development has been almost as phenomenal as that of the rural free delivery, is a product of the last twenty-five years. Prior to 1907, there were almost 1,500,000 telephones in rural homes. Table 32 presents data on the development of the service since this date, on the basis of the total number of telephones in rural houses. The 1920 census reported that 38.9 per cent of the total number of farms had telephones, and this varies in the different states from a high percentage of 86.1 in Iowa to as low as 5.7 in South Carolina. The census report showed about 500,000 fewer telephones than the figure given in the table for 1920, and a further decrease is indicated for 1930, however, the census report covers the number of homes having telephones, whereas the table covers the many cases in which a home has more than one phone. There was a loss of 259,299 rural telephones during the decade 1920-1930. The fol-

TABLE 32.—RURAL TELEPHONES IN THE UNITED STATES<sup>14</sup>

Year	Rural Stations	Census Data*
1907 . . . . .	1,462,800	
1912 . . . . .	2,279,800	
1917 . . . . .	2,787,500	
1920 . . . . .	3,156,900	2,498,493
1930 . . . . .		2,139,194

\* The census data are from the *Census of Agriculture*, vol. II, part II, p. 56

following quotation from a letter from the chief statistician of the American Bell Telephone and Telegraph Company is of aid in interpreting Table 32:

We determine rural telephone stations on a rate classification basis which enables us to state as "rural" those stations (phones) located in segregated houses served by so-called "farmer lines"

The table shows the number of such Bell Connections and Independent rural stations in the United States as of October 1, of each year. Our table should be increased by approximately 42 per cent if stations (phones) located in all places of less than 2500 inhabitants were to be counted as "rural stations."

The chief benefits derived from the presence of telephones in rural homes are as follows:

1. The telephone puts the farmer in immediate contact with all his neighbors for business, protection, and social life. The "line call," which brings to the phone a member of every farm home on the line, facilitates concerted action in time of accident, fire, or an announcement of importance to the entire neighborhood—the weather report is often transmitted over this "line call." Calling neighbors for help in harvesting, threshing or marketing is easy, and no time is lost because of miscalculation. Social and recreational affairs are made more inclusive, and no one need be uninformed about their postponement. All the social institutions—the school, lodge, grange, church, and others—insure a knowledge of their programs by means of the telephone.

<sup>14</sup> Information furnished by the American Bell Telephone and Telegraph Company in 1920. A letter written in January, 1930, indicated that the figures in this table are too high for the dates given, but expressed the opinion that at that time there were more than 3,000,000 rural telephones.

2. It puts the farmer in speedy contact with men whose professional services he may need—doctor, veterinary, druggist, preacher, editor, and lawyer, all of whom usually live in a nearby town or city.

3. It puts him in touch with the local market and, by long-distance calls, with the central markets in the larger cities. He can now sell his produce by telephone, and quickly adjust his prices to a fluctuating market because of the information he can obtain by telephone. The telephone and the rural free delivery together constitute a marketing agency for him.

4. The rural telephone encourages rural cooperation. Many rural lines are owned and operated by farmers' cooperative associations, but even where they are not owned by the community, cooperation on the part of the residents is necessary to get them installed. The constant contacts over these lines stimulate neighborliness on a broader scale than was possible before their installation, although it is possible that telephone conversations are replacing neighborly visits to some extent. However, there are no facts to substantiate this contention, but there is no one who will not agree that the telephone does keep neighbors in more constant contact, if in no other way than "eavesdropping."

**The Radio.**—The radio is the most recent invention in the field of communication, and its value to rural communities is incalculable. Prior to the Third National Radio Conference, held in Chicago in 1926, Secretary of Agriculture Wallace made the following statements, indicating the possible problems and the significance of radio broadcasting as far as agriculture is concerned:

1. The quantity, character, arrangement, and time allotment of such agricultural broadcasting material as weather forecasts, crop and market material, agricultural news, agricultural educational material, and entertainment.

2. The development of a national program of agricultural material, taking into consideration all state and local needs, thereby offering the widest distribution of agricultural information.

3. Through proper coordination to obtain the greatest economy and efficiency in handling agricultural material through broadcasting stations, and to eliminate duplication of effort.

4. The development of suitable time schedules for radio broadcasting materials to meet agricultural needs, and the division of time schedules among broadcasting stations.

The radio is so new and its development has been so rapid that statistics are out of date almost in the time it takes to print a book. However, we shall cite a few figures. A survey made by the United States Department of Agriculture in 1924 showed that the number of radios on farms had increased from 145,000 in 1923, to 370,000 in 1924. The Illinois Agricultural Association in 1924 attempted to ascertain the number of radios on the farms in that state, and it calculated that from 7 to 10 per cent of all farm homes were equipped with receiving sets. There were 2550 sets in farm homes in one county in Illinois, near St. Louis, Missouri,<sup>15</sup> and in 74 counties there were 21,045 sets.

The 1930 census report lists more than 12,000,000 families in this country as having radios. More than 50 per cent of all the families in ten states owned radios, New Jersey led with 63.3 per cent and was followed, in order, by New York, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Illinois, Connecticut, the District of Columbia, California, Wisconsin and Michigan. All of these states, with the exception of Wisconsin, have large urban populations, but in the West North Central states, a predominantly rural section, 43.1 per cent of all the families had radios. In Iowa, a state that is almost 60 per cent rural, 48.6 per cent of the families had radios, and in North Dakota, our most rural state (83.4 per cent of its population is rural), this was true of 40.8 per cent of all the families.<sup>16</sup>

Although it is not yet as effective a means of communication as the telephone, since it is still impossible to transmit messages except with special equipment, the radio is nevertheless an important unit in the communication facilities of a million American farm homes, and it is of benefit to these farm homes as follows:

1. It furnishes daily weather and market reports, both of which are of vital importance to the farmer.

2. It makes it possible for the farmer to learn about world events as they occur.

3. It promotes education, for agricultural extension education can be broadcast direct from the agricultural college or other agencies to the farm home, and other types of education can be promoted in the same way. Colleges of agriculture and other

<sup>15</sup> From a publication of the Illinois Agricultural Association, Chicago, Illinois.

<sup>16</sup> Census mimeographed release, November 30, 1931.

educational institutions are already giving credit for courses taken over the radio.

4. It can be used by state and national farm organizations, such as the Farm Bureau, the Grange, and the Farmers' Union, to keep their members informed on activities and programs and to increase participation in the wider educational and entertainment programs for farm people. For example, there are in one state over 200 grange halls, each of which is a potential receiving station where the farm neighborhood can assemble for radio entertainment and instruction.

5. It makes it possible for farm people to hear the world's best talent—writers, musicians, speakers—which they would otherwise not hear.

6. It relieves farm isolation in many ways. Although face-to-face contacts are not possible over the radio, the up-to-date knowledge of world events and the feeling that the farm family is enjoying the best talent the world can offer make farm people feel at home in social and world affairs.

7. When the transmission of photographs by wireless is perfected, the radio will bring moving pictures and other visual displays to farm homes.

**The Newspaper.**—It is quite impossible to measure or calculate the influence of the newspaper in rural life, for circulation figures are not known for the rural districts. Daily papers have entered the rural sections by the millions since the inauguration of the rural free delivery. There has been a tremendous increase in the circulation of agricultural papers in the last few years, a number of farm papers having a circulation of more than 1,000,000 copies per issue. County weeklies go to rural homes by the millions, and magazines of all kinds are read widely. The list on page 228 indicates the type of reading matter selected in a few cases in one rural community, and it could be multiplied hundreds and even thousands of times to cover the numerous rural communities in this country.

The United States Department of Agriculture circulated 32,000,000 copies of various publications in 1931,<sup>17</sup> and state departments of agriculture and colleges of agriculture probably circulated an equal number. All of these publications are means of

<sup>17</sup> *Report of the Secretary of Agriculture of the United States*, Washington, D. C., 1931, p. 94.



communication, some of them dealing only with technical phases of farming, but others serving as media for the communication of world events to rural districts. Altogether, the influence of newspapers and periodicals is incalculable.

Owner	1000 books, 2 dailies, 2 weeklies, 2 farm, 3 religious, 4 magazines, receives <i>Agricultural Bulletin</i>
Owner	1001 books, 3 dailies, 3 weeklies, 3 farm, 1 religious, 3 magazines, receives <i>Agricultural Bulletin</i> .
Owner.	1200 books, 5 dailies, 0 weeklies, 3 farm, 1 religious, 5 magazines, receives <i>Agricultural Bulletin</i>
Owner:	1000 books, 2 dailies, 0 weeklies, 3 farm, 0 religious, 6 magazines, receives <i>Agricultural Bulletin</i>
Owner	1000 books, 5 dailies, 1 weekly, 3 farm, 0 religious, 10 magazines, receives <i>Agricultural Bulletin</i>
Tenant	500 books, 2 dailies, 1 weekly, 3 farm, 0 religious, 1 magazine, no bulletins.
Tenant:	500 books, 2 dailies, 4 weeklies, 3 farm, 2 religious, 1 magazine, receives <i>Agricultural Bulletin</i>
Tenant	500 books, 1 daily, 2 weeklies, 1 farm, 1 religious, 1 magazine, no bulletins
Tenant:	250 books, 4 dailies, 4 weeklies, 4 farm, 1 religious, 5 magazines, receives <i>Agricultural Bulletin</i>
Tenant	250 books, 2 dailies, 2 weeklies, 3 farm, 1 religious, 4 magazines, receives <i>Agricultural Bulletin</i>

**Visiting and Community Gatherings.**—The old-fashioned country gathering and even old-fashioned country visiting are often said to be things of the past. There is a good bit of evidence which gives weight to this belief, for barn raisings, log rollings, husking and sewing bees are no longer as general as they once were. In the cases where these processes have not been entirely eliminated, they have been taken over by factories, machines and professional labor. However, a different type of rural community life is emerging in the increasing number of community churches and other buildings, consolidated schools, and grange halls, and this means the regaining of community gatherings. The truth of this is seen from a report of the Superintendent of Public Instruction for Ohio in 1916 which showed that community and neighborhood gatherings were eleven times as frequent during the year following the establishment of consolidated schools as during the year preceding.

<sup>28</sup> From Taylor, C. C., *A Social Survey of the Columbia Trade Area, Boone County, Missouri*.

Real family visiting, a phenomenon of the countryside alone, cannot be overlooked because of its significance as far as both intellectual and social contacts are concerned. In this connection, the writer made a survey of 306 farm families in Boone County, Missouri, and found 5 families who said they never visited their neighbors, and 42 who did not visit neighbors more than four times a year. On the other hand, 43 families made such visits on an average of twice a week, and 17 visited their neighbors daily. The number of families who visited as often as once a week was almost exactly the same as those whose visits were less frequent.

Four different surveys in Missouri showed that the farmers studied averaged one trip to town per week. In the Ashland Community in Howard County, 40 per cent of the families said they had visited beyond their own community, and 6 had taken trips over 100 miles in length within the past year. In the Columbia Community in Boone County, 90 per cent of the families said they regularly attended neighborhood, community or county social gatherings.

#### THE RESULTS OF SOCIALIZATION IN RURAL LIFE

**Rural People Become a Part of a Wider Culture.**—If socialization consists of all the processes by means of which people become participants in the lives of groups, the obvious result of the increased means of transportation and communication is that rural people are entering world culture to an increasing extent. For those who lived during pioneer days, the socialization process which started in the family never extended beyond the influence of the local neighborhood because of the absence of the facilities of transportation and communication which have just been discussed. But this does not present the complete picture, for even today there are many areas in which the relative absence of group life gives little opportunity for socialization outside the circle of home, school and church, and there are—and always have been—individuals and families who fail to participate in the groups which exist in their local districts. This is just another way of stating an obvious fact, that is, that the presence or absence of forms of association conditions the opportunities for socialization.

Sims, considering only the socialization which occurs in the local community, names the following "genetic" steps in community cooperation: (1) playing together, especially children,

(2) working together—barn raisings, husking bees, and the like ;  
(3) buying and selling together in various forms of cooperation ;  
and (4) uniting in æsthetic, cultural and altruistic enterprises  
After discussing what he considers the biological and psychological cause for this genetic order, he states what he calls a law of socialization :

Cooperation in rural neighborhoods has its genesis in and development through those forms of association which, beginning on the basis of least cost, gradually rise through planes of increasing cost to the stage of greatest cost in effort demanded, and which give at the same time ever increasing and more enduring benefits and satisfactions to the group . . . Normally, it is only where the cost is at a minimum that the unsocialized rural people will get together and function groupwise ; and normally, it is only by virtue of the cumulative effects of such functioning that the gradual integration of a real community mind takes place and makes possible cooperation on the basis of ever increasing cost <sup>19</sup>

As we have seen, there are, in addition to these "genetic" processes, the outside agencies which have entered the rural community, bringing with them contacts with the outside world. However, these outside agencies violate the cost principle which Simms formulates, for, as will be seen in the following chapter, tenants who are poor economically avail themselves of these agencies and through them extend their contacts beyond the local neighborhood.

The activities in which rural people participate because of the increased facilities of transportation and communication have been discussed, and the following broad generalization may be made at this point : Rural people are now rapidly becoming members of derivative or secondary groups, whereas a generation or so ago they were seldom members of other than primary groups. We have seen that these derivative groups encompass a range of associations which may be world wide, and that these associations are now within the farmer's actual daily life. The processes of socialization are working steadily through them, and the results are not only unmeasured but immeasurable.

**Loss of Intense Individualism.**—The processes of socialization have a constant and important influence on the personality characteristics of rural people which were discussed in Chapter

<sup>19</sup> Simms, N. L., *The Rural Community*, Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, 1920, pp. 633-641.

VII Intense individualism gives way under increased contacts, just as isolation and localism are dissipated under the influence of communication. Old traditions and dogmatic personal opinions are put to the test in competition with new ideas, new zests arise because new desires appear, solitary and meditative thinking of necessity becomes more overt under the impact of newspaper, telephone and radio, and tendencies toward petty egotism and bigotry fade in the light of this new way of thinking. Under the stimulus of increasing contacts, what Ross calls the "linear self," or one-sided personality, has an opportunity to become the "star self," or many-sided personality, an impossible evolution where a high degree of isolation prevails.<sup>20</sup>

#### QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

- 1 Discuss fully the statement that rural isolation is a thing of the past
- 2 What are the differences in thinking and attitudes of primary and secondary groups?
- 3 Discuss the influence of the radio on farm life and thinking
- 4 What agency of communication has done most to socialize farm people?
- 5 Discuss the difference between social contact and personal physical contact
- 6 Do you believe that rural people as a whole will ever be as socialized as urban people? Give reasons for your answer
- 7 If it is true that the farmer is an individualist, what will the agencies of socialization ultimately do to change this individualism?

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<sup>20</sup> Ross, E. A., *Principles of Sociology*, The Century Company, New York, 1920, pp 411-412.

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## CHAPTER XI

### THE PROBLEM OF TENANCY AND OWNERSHIP IN THE UNITED STATES

#### THE PREVALENCE OF FARM TENANCY IN THE UNITED STATES

**The Significance of Tenancy in Rural Life.**—The problem of farm tenancy in many respects resembles the wage and slum problems of the city, for all the fallacies everywhere inherent in theories about the unfortunate classes have attached themselves to it. Many people pass over it with the easy comment that "some people are simply of that caliber and nothing else can be expected of them", others get around it with the belief that wise and economic farming demands a tenant stage in which farmers can serve a sort of apprenticeship, a still greater number either know nothing of the prevalence of farm tenancy or are easily satisfied by the knowledge that more rural than urban families own their homes. None of these attitudes is satisfactory to those who are sincerely and intelligently concerned about American rural civilization, for such people are concerned with the types of homes, social institutions and communities found in rural life. Furthermore, they are convinced that any system of farm tenure which tends to breed rural slums and to handicap those who are born and reared on the farm, is unsatisfactory and is therefore of national concern and a problem for rural statesmanship. Few, if any, students of rural social life will deny that tenancy does handicap the individual and community life of the farmer, and that universal home ownership would eliminate this handicap, but in spite of this conviction, the proportion of landless farmers is increasing each year.

It is rather difficult to make statements which will hold true for all farms operated under the tenancy system, for there is of course a great difference in the tenants themselves. Furthermore, the form of tenancy which lasts only a few years and is only a stepping stone to ownership differs radically from that in which few

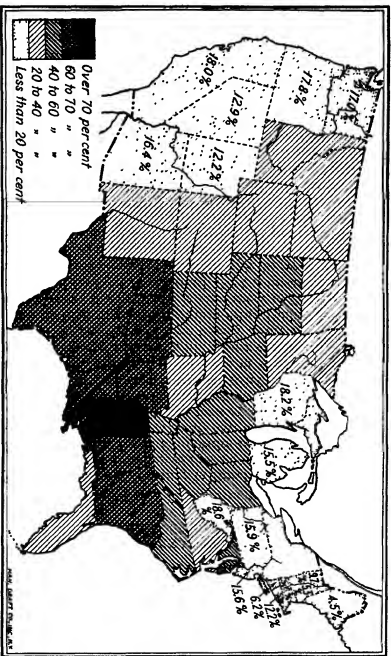


FIGURE 1.—LOCATION OF FARM TENANTS IN THE UNITED STATES, 1930  
 (Fifteenth Census, Agriculture (separate state reports), Second Series, Table 3)

ever aspire to—much less attain—ownership. But there are causes and results of tenancy which generally hold true for all types of tenants, and there are differences between tenant and owner farming which are inherent in a tenant system regardless of the circumstances under which it exists. If, in discussing the sociological consequences of tenancy later in this chapter, we keep in mind both the influence of tenancy on the farm family's standard of living as discussed in Chapter IX, and the great number of farm families who do not own their own homes, we shall begin to recognize the significance of farm tenancy in its social aspects.

**The Increase in Farm Tenancy.**—According to the census of 1880, 25.6 per cent of our farms were operated by men who did not own them, and since that time tenancy has increased, at a varying rate, from decade to decade. By 1890, 28.4 per cent of all farm operators were tenants, by 1900, 35.3 per cent, by 1910, 37.0 per cent, by 1920, 38.1 per cent; by 1925, 38.6 per cent, and by 1930, 42.37 per cent. Figure 1 presents graphically farm tenancy in this country in 1930, and Table 33 gives detailed data on tenancy for all states from 1900 to 1930 inclusive, for all geographical divisions and a few outstanding states from 1880 on, and, in addition, data on the mortgage indebtedness of the owner operator of farms. These additional data are given to make clear the fact that the so-called "full owner operators" fall far short of full ownership, for the mortgage holder always has first lien on farm equities, and therefore owners of heavily mortgaged farms come as near being tenants as owners. If the percentage of non-ownership because of mortgages is added to the percentage of tenancy, it will be apparent that far more than half of the farm land values in this country are in the hands of people who do not own the equities in them.

It would appear that the rate of increase in tenancy is slowing down because the percentage of increase in each decade from 1900-1930 has been considerably lower than that for the two decades 1880-1900, but this conclusion is erroneous, as will be shown by the following: In the two decades 1900-1920, the percentage of land farmed by tenants increased at a greater rate than did the percentage of the number of farms operated by tenants. For example, the increase in the percentage of rented farms was less than 3 per cent between 1910 and 1920, but the increase in



TABLE 33.—TENANCY RATE BY DIVISIONS AND STATES—INCREASE AND DECREASE, 1900-1930; RELATION OF TENANTS TO THEIR LANDLORDS, AND RATIO OF MORTGAGE DEBT TO LAND VALUE IN OWNER-OPERATED FARMS, 1930<sup>1</sup>

Division and State	Tenancy Rate							Percentage Related to Their Landlords, 1930	Ratio of Mortgage Debt to Land Values, 1930
	1930	1925	1920	1910	1900	1890	1880		
<i>New England</i>	6.3	5.6	7.4	8.0	9.4	9.5	8.5		
Maine	4.5	3.4	4.2	4.3	41.7			30.2	33.78
New Hampshire	5.3	4.8	6.7	6.9	7.5			26.5	36.11
Vermont	9.7	9.3	11.6	12.3	14.6			25.0	42.71
Massachusetts	5.6	4.8	7.1	8.1	9.6			30.4	36.12
Rhode Island	12.5	12.1	15.5	16.0	20.2			21.0	33.22
Connecticut	6.2	6.4	8.5	9.8	12.9			26.1	33.59
<i>Middle Atlantic</i>	14.7	15.8	20.7	22.3	25.3	22.1	19.2		
New York	13.2	14.1	19.2	20.8	23.0			28.5	39.17
New Jersey	15.6	15.9	23.0	24.8	29.8			24.2	37.23
Pennsylvania	15.9	17.4	21.0	23.3	26.0			29.6	39.47
<i>East North Central</i>	27.3	26.0	28.1	27.0	26.3	22.8	20.5		
Ohio	26.3	25.5	29.5	28.4	27.4			30.4	42.88
Indiana	30.1	29.2	32.5	30.0	28.6			28.0	40.23
Illinois	43.1	42.0	42.7	41.4	39.3	34.0	31.4	28.7	43.81
Michigan	15.5	15.1	17.7	16.8	15.8			31.0	41.55
Wisconsin	18.2	15.5	14.4	13.9	13.5			38.6	50.17
<i>West North Central</i>	39.0	37.8	34.2	30.0	29.6	24.0	20.5		
Minnesota	31.1	27.1	24.7	21.0	17.3			31.5	44.62
Iowa	47.3	44.7	41.7	37.8	34.9	28.1	23.8	32.1	48.29
Missouri	34.8	32.6	28.8	29.9	30.5			23.1	45.39
North Dakota	35.1	34.4	25.6	14.3	8.5	6.9	2.1	22.3	38.14
South Dakota	44.6	41.5	34.0	24.8	21.8			25.0	38.58
Nebraska	47.1	46.4	42.9	38.1	36.9	24.7	18.0	34.8	38.74
Kansas	42.4	42.2	40.4	36.8	35.2			34.4	35.39
<i>South Atlantic</i>	48.1	44.5	46.8	45.9	44.2	38.5	36.1		
Delaware	33.8	35.8	39.3	41.9	50.3			13.5	39.70
Maryland	26.5	26.4	28.9	29.5	33.6			19.9	39.29
Virginia	28.1	25.2	25.6	26.5	30.7			20.2	31.61
West Virginia	18.6	16.3	16.2	20.5	21.8			20.6	31.15
North Carolina	49.2	42.2	43.5	42.3	41.4	34.1	35.5	15.3	37.18
South Carolina	65.1	65.1	64.5	63.0	61.0			11.2	40.06
Georgia	68.2	63.8	66.6	65.6	59.9			12.6	39.85
Florida	28.4	21.3	25.3	26.7	26.5			13.2	27.06
<i>East South Central</i>	55.0	50.3	49.7	50.7	48.1	38.3	36.8		
Kentucky	35.9	32.0	33.4	33.9	32.8			22.9	38.37
Tennessee	46.2	41.0	41.1	41.1	40.6			19.2	38.40
Alabama	64.7	60.7	57.9	60.2	57.7			14.6	39.72
Mississippi	72.7	68.3	66.1	66.1	62.4	52.8	43.8	9.7	37.21
<i>West South Central</i>	62.3	59.2	52.9	52.8	49.1	38.6	35.2		
Arkansas	63.0	56.7	51.3	50.0	45.4			12.4	38.21
Louisiana	66.6	60.1	57.1	55.3	58.0			11.8	38.70
Oklahoma	61.5	58.6	51.0	54.8	43.8			14.9	33.60
Texas	60.9	60.4	53.3	52.6	49.7			18.1	32.73
<i>Mountain</i>	24.4	22.2	25.4	10.7	12.2	7.1	7.4		
Montana	24.5	21.9	21.3	8.9	9.2			14.4	39.45
Idaho	25.3	24.4	15.9	10.3	8.8			19.5	39.14
Wyoming	22.0	17.9	12.5	8.2	7.6			16.2	33.48
Colorado	34.5	30.9	23.0	18.2	22.6			16.6	38.42
New Mexico	20.0	17.1	12.2	5.5	9.4			15.2	30.46
Arizona	16.4	21.5	18.1	9.3	8.4			11.3	31.19
Utah	12.2	11.1	10.9	7.9	8.8			35.3	34.80
Nevada	12.9	7.9	9.4	12.4	11.4			18.9	39.41
<i>Pacific</i>	17.7	15.6	20.1	17.2	19.7	14.7	16.8		
Washington	17.0	16.3	18.7	18.7	14.4			21.1	32.67
Oregon	17.8	16.8	18.8	15.1	17.8			23.1	34.44
California	11.8	18.0	21.4	20.6	23.1			11.8	31.22

the percentage of rented acres was 11 per cent, and in this same decade 11 per cent more of the total value of farm lands and buildings was taken over by tenants. Thus while in 1920 tenants

<sup>1</sup> Fifteenth Census, Agriculture, vol. 11, part 2, tables 10 and 19

farmed only 38.1 per cent of the farms, they farmed 44 per cent of the improved acreage and operated 46 per cent of the total value of land.<sup>2</sup> The increase in the percentage of the acreage farmed by tenants continued from 1920-1930, but the percentage of farm values slightly decreased.<sup>3</sup> In two states, Delaware and Illinois, over one-half the total acreage of farm land was leased in both 1910 and 1920; and if improved land alone is taken as the basis, tenants were farming over one-half the active land in ten other states in 1920—Alabama, Georgia, Iowa, Kansas, Mississippi, Oklahoma, South Carolina, South Dakota, Texas, and Washington. There was a considerable loss in the percentage of harvested crops farmed by tenants in 1930, the loss over 1920 being 6.1 per cent for tenants and only 1.6 per cent for owners.<sup>4</sup>

Table 34 is taken in abridged form from a report of the United States Department of Agriculture in 1922. It is apparent, from

TABLE 34.—PERCENTAGE OF INCREASE IN LESSEE FARMING IN THE UNITED STATES, 1900-1920<sup>5</sup>

Geographic Division	Farms	Valuation of		Total Valuation
		Land	Buildings	
United States	7.9	23.2	20.5	29.2
New England	1.4	7.1	13.2	21.7
Middle Atlantic	15.9	13.8	15.4	27.2
East North Central	7.2	24.8	17.4	11.2
West North Central	15.6	31.0	34.7	13.5
South Atlantic	5.5	16.7	16.3	6
East South Central	3.2	10.9	21.0	8.7
West South Central	7.7	34.3	14.6	4.1
Mountain	25.3	36.6	35.7	15.6
Pacific	1.8	7.2	3.4	2.2

the data in this table, that any economic and social problems arising from a system of tenant farming attain a greater magnitude under a continued increase in the number of tenants with a

<sup>2</sup> Stewart, L. C., *Mimeographed Report from the Division of Land Economics*, Bureau of Agricultural Economics, United States Department of Agriculture, Washington, D. C., 1922.

<sup>3</sup> Press Release, Bureau of the Census, July 23, 1931.

<sup>4</sup> *Fifteenth Census*, Agriculture, vol. 11, part 11, table 7.

<sup>5</sup> Stewart, L. C., *op. cit.*

consequent greater proportion of farms coming under their direction.<sup>6</sup>

From a social point of view, it is the number of tenants, rather than the number of acres or the value of the farm property they control, which is of importance. The number of actual tenant families in this country has increased from 1,024,601 in 1880, to 2,664,365 in 1930. Although there has been no great increase since 1880 in the value of the farm property controlled by tenants, the slowing down of the relative number of farm owners and the consequent relatively smaller increase in tenants does not alter the fact that millions of people are still living under the conditions prevalent in tenant communities, and therefore on standards of living below those of farm owner families, and far below what is necessary if an adequate and satisfactory civilization is to be established in the rural sections of this country

#### THE CAUSES OF FARM TENANCY

**Tenancy as a Step to Farm Ownership.**—The basic cause of tenancy in this country is the fact that it is often a step toward ownership and has therefore gradually played a larger and larger part in the acquisition of land. A protracted period of tenant farming is becoming increasingly necessary in the step from non-ownership to ownership, for, with the public domain practically exhausted, with inheritance playing the small part in land ownership that it does in this country, and with inadequate credit facilities for purchasing land, there is left for the young farmer only one means of attaining ownership—climbing the “agricultural ladder,” one rung of which is tenancy. The period of homesteading has practically passed, the limits of our agricultural frontier have been reached and there is almost no more “free land.” Nowadays a man who avails himself of the homesteading privilege generally has to make a considerable money outlay on irrigation or drainage to make his land productive. Landed estates have never developed in American agriculture to any great degree, and consequently inheritance and gifts have always been minor factors in acquiring land. Therefore beginning farmers almost always make the start toward farm ownership as tenants.

<sup>6</sup> Although complete data from the 1930 census were not available when this was written, it is known that the increase in farm tenancy between 1920 and 1930 was almost four times as great as it was between 1910 and 1920.

In the earlier period of our national history the rise to ownership was not so difficult and, consequently, it was very rapid. The farmer remained a tenant only a short time, and only comparatively few failed to become owners. Today, however, thousands are finding the ascent extremely difficult, with the result that more and more get stalled, remaining in the tenant stage the rest of their life and owning no land to pass on to their children. Thus what was once a rapid stream of farmers making steady progress to ownership has, to a large extent, become a sluggish stream of congenital tenants.

**The Increase in Land Values.**—Scarcely thirty years ago, the savings a tenant or even a hired man could accumulate in a few years would buy good land in Kansas, Nebraska, the Dakotas, Oklahoma and Texas. In 1900 the value of farms in the South Atlantic and East Central states averaged only \$1511 and \$1324, respectively, but by 1920 three times that amount was needed to purchase a farm in these sections, and twice that amount was necessary in 1930, even in the face of the current deflation in land values. Between 1900 and 1920, land values multiplied four times in North Carolina, Georgia, Mississippi and Arkansas, and five times in Florida and Texas. In Iowa, in 1920, between \$20,000 and \$40,000 was required to buy and equip a farm. Table 35 compares the period between 1850 and 1920 as to the amount of capital necessary to purchase and equip farms in the various geographic sections of the country. Although they were abnormally high in 1920, the land values for that year are used instead of the extremely unstable values of 1930. Table 35 is of particular significance in that the figures of total average value are based on the farm unit, the unit the tenant must purchase if he would become an owner.

Land value and tenancy are frequently rather closely associated. For example, land values in Oklahoma increased 2.5 times, and tenancy, 8.9 per cent; in Georgia land values doubled, and tenancy increased 5.8 per cent, while in Nebraska the increase in land values and tenancy was 3.5 times and 5.3 per cent, respectively. The increase in tenancy for the entire nation during this decade was only 1.7 per cent.

There were 288 counties in the twelve cotton-producing states in which land in 1920 was valued as much as 25 per cent above the total average value in each of their respective states, and each

TABLE 35.—AVERAGE VALUE OF FARM PROPERTY, OR THE AMOUNT OF CAPITAL REQUIRED TO PURCHASE AND EQUIP A FARM<sup>7</sup>

Geographic Division	Value of Farm Units			
	1920	1900	1870	1850
United States	\$12,084	\$3,563	\$3,363	\$2,596
New England	7,492	3,333	3,135	2,596
Middle Atlantic	9,290	4,759	5,657	3,880
East North Central	15,898	5,004	4,057	2,189
West North Central	25,517	5,488	2,802	1,568
South Atlantic	5,292	1,511	1,980	2,845
East South Central	4,203	1,324	1,897	2,211
West South Central	7,652	2,146	1,449	3,485
Mountain	16,727	5,934	1,421	892
Pacific	22,664	7,864	6,428	6,010

county likewise exceeded its state average in tenancy by from 1 to 31 per cent. The same tendency was apparent also in every other state in the Union. Goldenweiser and Truesdell make the following statement on tenancy and farm values:

Even a casual examination of the statistics of tenancy and farm values brings out the fact that a high price of farm land per acre and a high percentage of tenancy are frequently associated, as in the State of Iowa, and that, conversely, areas of low-priced land are very often of infrequent tenancy, as in the case of New Hampshire or Montana. Further, it is a generally accepted theory that high-priced land and a high rate of tenancy usually or always go together. In explanation of the relationship it is stated that the high price of the land (with the consequent difficulty of purchase) on the one hand, makes tenancy necessary, while the high productive value of the land, on the other hand, makes tenancy possible, for a farm in order to be rentable must produce sufficient income to enable the tenant to pay his rent and make his own living besides. In fact, the statement has frequently been made that in order to be a tenant farm, a farm must be capable of supporting two families—that of the tenant and that of the landlord. This is an overstatement, to be sure, since few landlords depend for their whole income upon the rent of a single farm; but it gives

<sup>7</sup> *Fourteenth Census of the United States, 1920*, vol. v, p. 56. Equipment includes land, buildings, implements, machinery, and livestock. Land values have shrunk since 1920, which was of course a period of inflation, but they will undoubtedly in due time reach the 1920 levels.

effective expression to the idea that a tenant farm must produce decidedly more than what is required for the support of the operator's family.<sup>8</sup>

These authors then cite detailed statistics per geographical division which are too elaborate to present here; two additional excerpts from their report will suffice:

In some cases the correspondence between the tenancy percentage and the value of the land per acre is very close and striking. In the East North Central Division, for example, in the first group of counties, comprising those with a percentage of tenancy above 39.1 in 1920, the average value of farm land was \$179.93 per acre, in the second group, with tenancy from 26.6 to 39.1 per cent, the value was \$103.71; in the third group, with tenancy from 16.5 to 26.6 per cent, the average value was \$60.23; and in the fourth group, with tenancy ranging from 0.8 to 16.5 per cent, the average value of the land per acre was only \$47.24. In the West North Central Division the averages for the four groups were, respectively, \$142.16, \$91.43, \$69.91, and \$35.95, showing again a rapid and consistent decline, following the decline in the percentage of tenancy from group to group.

There is usually a close relationship between the rise in the value of farm land and the percentage of tenancy. Wherever land increases rapidly in value the owners are inclined to hold their land in order to realize the profit, and since they depend for part of their returns on the rise in value they can afford to rent their land at a comparatively low rate. In their eagerness to make the land pay something while they hold it for a higher price the owners underbid each other in the matter of rent, but they will not sell. Thus, it becomes difficult for the tenant to buy, since the purchase price is high, and at the same time it becomes profitable for him to keep on renting, since the rent is low.<sup>9</sup>

It was the discovery of the relationship between the prosperity of farming sections and this increasing tenancy which first caused many students concern a few years ago, nor can that concern be disregarded or belittled. There is a corollary to this relationship, resulting to some extent from the same cause, *i.e.*, there is a loss in rural population, due partly in some states to the removal of young farmers to areas of lower land values in order to escape a long period as tenant farmers. Although this adds a farm owner

<sup>8</sup> Goldenweiser, E. A., and Truesdell, L. E., *Farm Tenancy in the United States*, Census Monograph IV, Government Printing Office, Washington, D. C., 1924, p. 54.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 57-67.

in the low-value area, it sometimes leaves a tenant in the high-value district. But the young farmer is justified in such a move, for it now takes more time to accumulate enough capital for the first payment on a farm than was the case twenty years ago. Twenty-eight years was the average age of farmers making the first payment in Iowa in 1890, and, in 1915, the average age was thirty-four years,<sup>10</sup> in other words, the young farm owners of 1915 had been tenants or hired men six years longer, on the average, than those of 1890. The accuracy of these calculations has been severely questioned, but, after considering every possibility of their statistical proof or disproof, Goldenweiser and Truesdell make this conservative statement.

It seems probable that there has been some increase in the average time a man must spend as a tenant before he can acquire the ownership of a farm, since the price of farm land, even if computed in equivalent labor or commodity units rather than in dollars, is decidedly higher than it was 40 years ago<sup>11</sup>

The ease with which, thirty years ago, it was possible to make first payments on farms from savings does not, however, mean that the hired men of today are not as well paid, but rather that land selling for from \$75 to \$400 an acre demands more capital. Consequently few, if any, hired men can make the change to owners in one step, and therefore, to achieve ownership, they must go through a period of tenant farming.

High land values are the direct cause of the slowing up of the advance of young farmers toward ownership, for it necessarily concentrates a greater number of them at the stage of tenant operation and thus raises the percentage of tenant-operated farms. Although some students of the so-called "agricultural ladder" question the effect of high land values on the age of attaining farm ownership,<sup>12</sup> every survey of farmers who own land, except those who have gotten it through inheritance, gift or by marriage, bears out the fact that the men now working their way to ownership attain it at a later age than was the case a generation ago.

<sup>10</sup> Lloyd, O. G., "Farm Leases in Iowa," *Bulletin No. 159*, Iowa Experiment Station, Iowa State College of Agriculture, Ames, 1915, p. 171.

<sup>11</sup> Goldenweiser, E. A., and Truesdell, L. E., *op. cit.*, p. 108.

<sup>12</sup> United States Department of Agriculture, *Separate Form Yearbook, 1923*, No. 897, p. 50.

**The Break-up of the Former Landed Estates.**—In addition to the generally widespread tenancy of the present day, there are in this country typical tenant sections, that is, sections in which renting, cropping, or resident hired-men tenure is predominant. The most outstanding tenant section is in the south, where the old plantations, once owned by great planters and farmed by slaves, are now—and have been since the Civil War—farmed in large part by renters and croppers. Although this transition from owner to tenant operation has had no relation to the increase in tenancy since 1880, previous to that time it was probably the greatest single cause—at least, the districts which were formerly slave plantations had at that time, as they have had ever since, the highest percentage of tenancy.

In 1930, over 70 per cent of all the farms in 76 counties in Georgia were tenant-farmed, and this was true of over 80 per cent of all the farms in 12 counties. In Mississippi in the same year there were 33 counties with tenants operating over 70 per cent of all the farms, 19 counties with 80 per cent of the farms thus operated, and 9 counties with 90 per cent. In the ten cotton states—Alabama, Arkansas, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee, and Texas—there were 248 counties, more than 70 per cent of whose farmers were tenants, 68 counties with over 80 per cent, and 16 counties with over 90 per cent. The highest tenancy rate of any county in the United States was 96.8 per cent, that of Laflöre County, Georgia.<sup>18</sup> The maps on pp. 234 and 244, and the figures on pp. 245 and 249 show the location of these tenant sections.

This same process is taking place today to some degree in those sections where great ranges are being broken up and turned into cultivation, but with the increase in large-scale and mechanized farming, it is possible that the new areas coming under cultivation will in the future be absorbed in corporation farms rather than broken up into small tenant farms.

**Reclamation Projects.**—It would, however, be a mistake to assume that the old plantation areas, still operated by Negro croppers, hired men or tenants, are the only typical tenant sections in the country, for there are other areas where a few powerful capitalists still own practically all the land and farm it under

<sup>18</sup> *Fifteenth Census*, vol. i, Agriculture (reports for separate states), Statistics by Counties, Second Series, state table 3, and county table xii.



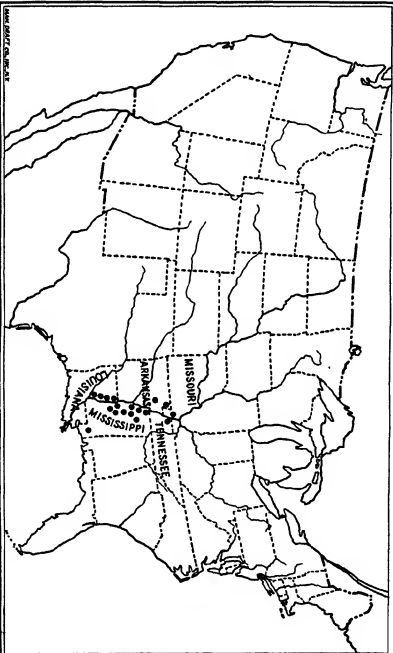


FIGURE 2—LOCATION OF ALL COUNTIES WITH MORE THAN 90 PER CENT TENANCY  
(Fifteenth Census, Agriculture (reports for separate states), Second Series, County Table 12)

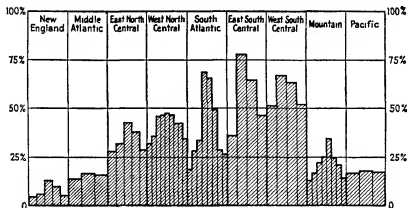


FIGURE 3—TENANCY RATES PER GEOGRAPHIC DIVISIONS, 1930  
(Fifteenth Census, Agriculture [reports for separate states], Second Series, Table 3)

either a hired-man, cropper or tenant system. The so-called "South-east Missouri section," where a great amount of capital was required for draining the swamp lands, afforded an example of this a few years ago. In 1920, the author and his colleagues studied a portion of this section which included parts of New Madrid and Scott Counties. Of the total 48,232 acres of the section in farms, they found that 36,640 acres were owned by 11 people, one owner alone having an interest in 31,000 acres. These large estates, together with a high rate of tenancy, had been developing for less than two generations and had resulted from a widespread drainage project. Between 1900 and 1920 the number of farm families in these two counties had tripled, but tenant farmers accounted for practically the entire increase. The tenancy rate in 1930 for New Madrid County was 90.9 per cent. Table 36 shows the relation between tenant and owner farms for an individual community in Scott County.

In the newly developing areas where the land has to be cleared, drained or irrigated, or where extensive mechanical operations are necessary and where, as a result, a large capital outlay is necessary, two factors are present which tend to make ownership difficult for the small landholder. First, such reclamation projects are best put through as large-scale enterprises, and, second, the selling price of this reclaimed land must necessarily be high in order to cover the cost of reclamation. The man whose capital is

## TENANCY AND OWNERSHIP

TABLE 36 —PERCENTAGE OF OWNER AND TENANT FARMS  
IN THE SIKESTON COMMUNITY, SOUTHEAST MISSOURI<sup>14</sup>

Year	Owner	Tenant
1880	55 89	44 11
1890	45 16	54 84
1900	38 33	61 65
1910	28 95	71 05
1920	30 39	69 61

small cannot drain, irrigate or even clear a farm for himself, nor can he pay for it after it has been reclaimed by others. Consequently he rents, or becomes a hired man on mechanized farms. Furthermore, it is in the sections where land values are high or rapidly increasing that farmers retire from work, and many of these retired farmers retain the ownership to their farm even if others want to buy their land.

**Increase in Landed Estates.**—The greater number of landed estates may possibly be another cause of tenancy in this country. Certain farming sections have been under cultivation over a long period, each generation passing on to the next some land as an inheritance. But there is often a period between the time that the son takes over the farm and the deed is actually transferred, when he rents the land from his father. Although his position in relation to both the farm and its owner differs vastly from that of an outside tenant, he is nevertheless listed as a tenant and thus increases the number of tenant operators. It is impossible to determine the extent to which tenancy is thus actually increased, but it is known that many tenants are related to the owners of the farms they operate (see Table 33, page 236). Needless to say, if the owner had sold his farm at once to another owner operator, the period of tenant operation would not have intervened. Farms in New England are now being farmed for about the sixth generation, and those in the Mississippi River Valley, for about the third. In other words, men whose fathers started at the bottom are now inheriting the earnings of their pioneer ancestors of from two to five generations; and, although they are listed temporarily as tenants, these men may be in an even better position

<sup>14</sup> Taylor, Carl C, Yoder, F R, and Zimmerman, C C, *A Social Study of Farm Tenancy in Southeast Missouri* (unpublished)

for ultimate ownership than their fathers were. Tenancy was never a necessary step for their fathers or grandfathers who homesteaded or bought land when it was cheap.

#### THE ECONOMIC CONSEQUENCES OF TENANCY

**Agriculture Poorly Balanced.**—The owner operator of to-day has ceased to follow the pure cropping system because it does not pay, but the tenant continues its use because it is about the only system he finds profitable. As a rule, he lacks the capital to purchase the equipment needed for stock farming; even if he can afford it, not every farm is adapted to it. But if neither of these obstacles is present, there is still the chance that the farm he will work next year will not be fitted for livestock and he will therefore have to reduce the size of his flocks and herds at great disadvantage and, possibly, loss.

The tenant's lack of capital and of purchasing power makes his credit standing poor. He needs quick, sure money, and crops give him this money more quickly than livestock, for with crops he can push the farm nearer its maximum production. He has little or no interest in the farm itself, his great interest lies in its power as a unit of economic production, and, unless specifically forbidden by his rent contract, he will therefore choose the system of farming which best suits his individual needs, mining the soil mercilessly if necessary. But he cannot be blamed for this, for he must follow this very procedure if he is ever to raise himself from the tenant to the owner class.

The sections where the farm's cash income comes from single crop farming are the very sections where tenancy rates are high, and the two outstanding examples of this are the cotton and wheat belts (see Figure 2, page 244). A table of statistics compiled by Bizzell shows that in the ten leading cotton states, the proportion of improved lands farmed by tenants is in almost direct ratio to the number of bales of cotton produced in the states.<sup>15</sup> It is everywhere well known that the economic basis of agriculture has been damaged by such cropping, and that there is a crying need for more livestock on southern farms. A survey of a high-class and diversified farming area in Missouri showed that 17.4 per cent of the tenant farmers had no more than two kinds of livestock,

<sup>15</sup> Bizzell, W. B., "Farm Tenancy in the United States," *Bulletin No. 278*, Texas Agricultural Experiment Station, A & M College, 1921.

and only 35.4 per cent had three kinds, while 57.6 per cent of the owners had four and five kinds.<sup>16</sup> According to this and other surveys of the same sections, owners had about one-quarter more livestock per acre than did tenants. A survey of over 1000 farms in North Carolina in 1922 showed that tenants had a little over one-half as many animals per cultivated crop acre as owners, and a similar variation has existed in every comparative study of farm owners and tenants in the same locality.<sup>17</sup>

If livestock value per farm per state is taken as the general index, it is seen that low livestock values are found in tenant areas. The ten states ranking lowest in livestock per farm are, in order, Alabama, North Carolina, South Carolina, Mississippi, Georgia, Arkansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Florida, and Virginia; and no other ten states in the Union have as high a rate of tenancy as these ten combined.

There is a close relationship between the type of farming and the amount of tenancy in a community. The cause and effect probably act both ways—certain types of farming encourage tenancy, and tenancy perpetuates certain types of farming. Goldenweiser and Truesdell quote findings from the *Twelfth Census Report* which appear in Table 37. These data are for thirty years ago, but the same authors have compiled elaborate data<sup>18</sup> for the

TABLE 37.—PERCENTAGE OF TENANCY AMONG FARMERS CLASSIFIED ACCORDING TO PRINCIPAL SOURCES OF INCOME, 1900<sup>19</sup>

Principal Source of Income	Per Cent of Tenancy	Principal Source of Income	Per Cent of Tenancy	Principal Source of Income	Per Cent of Tenancy
Cotton	67.7	Hay and grain	39.3	Dairy products	23.3
Tobacco	47.9	Sugar crops	35.1	Livestock	20.3
Rice	45.7	Vegetables	30.4	Fruits	16.5

<sup>16</sup> Taylor, Carl C., *A Social Survey of the Columbia Trade Area, Boone County, Missouri*, 1920 (unpublished).

<sup>17</sup> Taylor, Carl C., and Zimmerman, C. C., "The Economic and Social Conditions of North Carolina Farmers," *Bulletin*, North Carolina State College, Raleigh, 1923.

<sup>18</sup> Goldenweiser and Truesdell, pp. 34, 35.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 33.

Twelfth Federal Reserve District (Arizona, California, Idaho, Nevada, Oregon, Utah and Washington) for 1920, and these later statistics bear out the conclusions obvious from the earlier figures, viz., that the higher percentages of tenancy are found on farms whose chief products are cash crops. From Figure 4,<sup>20</sup> covering the four predominant agricultural sections of the country, it is apparent that the cotton and wheat belts—which are cash crop areas—lead in tenancy

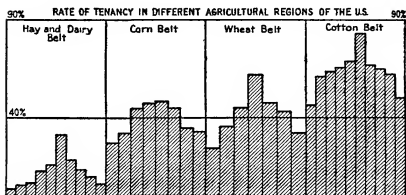


FIGURE 4

**Depletion of Soil Fertility.**—Too many crops, too few animals, the failure to rotate crops, and the absence of improvement crops serve consistently to deplete soil fertility. Livestock on the farm furnishes manure for fertilizers, necessitates planting a large portion of the acreage to pasture and forage crops, and keeps a much larger amount of the "ruffage" on the farm. The principle of crop rotation is the conscious choice of those crops which supplement each other in conserving and increasing soil fertility, improvement crops are planted to restore to the soil those elements of fertility depleted by other crops, and to supply it with those elements which will provide a basis for future crop production.

Tenants seldom find it to their advantage to follow any of these practices. Their stay on one farm is often too short to

<sup>20</sup> See Baker, O. E., "A Graphic Summary of American Agriculture," *Miscellaneous Publications No. 105*, United States Department of Agriculture, Washington, D. C., May, 1932.

permit a definite system of crop rotation and they therefore plant the crop which will pay them best that year. Nor do they plant improvement crops, for their tenure is usually too short to allow them to get the ultimate benefit of such crops. The results of such practices are best seen in the sections and the farms which have been worked by tenants over a long period of time. For example, in a survey of over 1000 farms in North Carolina, it was found that Negro croppers in one county of the cotton and tobacco belt were raising soil-depleting crops on 99.6 per cent of the land.<sup>21</sup>

**The Effect of the Tenant's Poverty on Agriculture and on Community Life.**—Successful farming demands both capital and long-time planning, and, as has been said, the tenant has neither the capital or credit, nor the long-time interest in one farm, for profitable farming. He has to take short cuts to dividends, do what will pay best for the time being, and let everything else go undone. The effects of this procedure on agriculture have already been discussed; but agriculture is not the only sufferer, for this practice also affects community life. The tenant cannot maintain a standard of living as high as that of the farm owner, nor can he educate his children as well, supply as many comforts and conveniences for his home, or support community enterprises to the extent that the more wealthy and prosperous farm owners do.<sup>22</sup> Consequently, the presence in a community of a large tenant class is bound to have an unfavorable influence on the community as a whole.

#### THE SOCIAL CONSEQUENCES OF TENANCY

**A Comparatively Low Standard of Living.**—Tenancy jeopardizes every factor which makes for a standard of social efficiency in individual, home, or community life. In the first place, the tenant family does not own the house it lives in—a fact of the deepest significance not only to the family itself but to the community and nation as well, for tenant homes are practically always poorer than those of the farm owners in the same community. Renting a home offers little incentive to its improvement, and, since the tenant cannot afford to improve someone else's property, he often invests his money in some immediately con-

<sup>21</sup> Taylor, C. C., and Zimmerman, C. C., *op cit.*, p. 11.

<sup>22</sup> This statement is supported by the detailed data in the research bulletins listed in the readings at the end of this chapter.

sumable product such as an automobile or radio, particularly when he is not certain of his tenure. The landlord never expects to live in the house and consequently has little interest in any improvements beyond those that will raise the rental value of the farm.

In his study in Wake County, North Carolina, Anderson found that tenants do avail themselves of modern facilities when they are financially able and when the choice is in their hands. Automobiles were owned by 60 per cent of the tenants, and the average annual expenditure for this item per tenant family was \$262. This ranked fifth in the list of the expenditures of tenant families, being outranked only by expenditures for farm operation, clothing, food and fuel.<sup>28</sup>

The standard of good housing provides for one and one-half rooms per person, and in this the houses of tenant farmers are far below the standard. In the Sikeston, Missouri, Community, whose tenant population includes both hired men and croppers, 31.0 per cent of the croppers live in either one- or two-room houses. The average size of the cropper families in this district was a little over 3 persons, and this means that in 31 per cent of these homes there was only two-thirds of a room per person. The average for the share-cropper group in the entire community was one room for 1.1 people. An adequate housing standard permits only one and one-half persons per bedroom as an average. In the Sikeston Community there were 2.25 persons per bedroom in tenant families, 2.52 in cropper families, and 3.1 in hired-man families. There were clothes closets in only 32.2 per cent of the hired men's homes, and 7.8 per cent of their homes had no porches, 45.5 per cent of the tenant homes had no grass plot in the yard, and 94.1 per cent were without trees. The yards were measured on six points: grass plot, trees, shrubs, flowers, yard walks, and yard fences; a good score would cover all of these points, and a normal score would show at least 5 of the six. The average cropper's home scored 2.08, the average tenant's, 3.46; and the average hired man's, 2.13, as against the 4.85 scored by the owner-operator homes. This community is representative of a typical tenant area, and shows the small degree to which ade-

<sup>28</sup> Anderson, W. A., Doctor's dissertation presented to Cornell University, 1929 (manuscript).



quate housing standards can be expected under a tenant farming system

In North Carolina, it was estimated in 1922 that one-fifth of the landless families lived in one- or two-room shacks, and a similar condition prevails throughout the entire southern tenant area. In other sections of the country the difference between tenant and owner houses is not so marked. For example, Rankin found no very great discrepancy in this respect in Nebraska,<sup>24</sup> nor is it found to the same degree in other corn-belt states, for here tenancy is of an extremely different type from that found in the cotton belt.<sup>25</sup> But wherever tenancy exists, there is found also the lack of incentive for home improvement on the part of both landlord and tenant, and its effects are usually clearly evident within each separate community.

The home is the major physical environment of the farm population, and if the house is old and poorly built, the room and yard space inadequate, the arrangement, heating and lighting poor, then its inhabitants are greatly handicapped in life, health and happiness. Tenants quite universally suffer these handicaps to a greater degree than do owners in the same community

Household equipment and conveniences are even more important than the house itself, for they constitute the farm woman's work material and dictate the organization of the farm family life. In the Sikeston Community, where nine-tenths of the homes are not owned by their inhabitants, the lack of conveniences is in direct ratio to a low-tenure status, as shown in Table 38

The data in Table 39, for Tennessee, North Carolina, Iowa, and Nebraska, are representative of the country as a whole, and indicate that some differences exist in household conveniences between tenant and owner homes throughout the country. Whether the item used as the standard of measurement is one of home or household convenience or one furnished by the tenant or owner, tenant families are handicapped in housing and home organization and life to the degree indicated by these tables

<sup>24</sup> Rankin, J. O., "The Nebraska Farm Family," *Bulletin 185*, Nebraska Agricultural Experiment Station, Lincoln, 1923.

<sup>25</sup> In sections where tenancy is a normal step toward ownership and where great numbers of tenants are the sons or sons-in-law of the owners, there is practically no difference between the standards of living of tenants and owners; but in sections such as the cotton belt, where tenancy is a recognized system of farming, differences in tenant and owner standards of living are pronounced

TABLE 38—PERCENTAGE OF VARIOUS TYPES OF TENURE HOMES HAVING HOUSEHOLD CONVENIENCES<sup>16</sup>

Convenience	Owner	Tenant	Cropper	Hired Man
Inside toilets	17 07	1 66		
Running water in kitchen	17 07	1 11		
Electric or gas lights	19 50	1 66		
Heating plant	12 19			
Oil stove	9 51	23 33		9 55
Washing machine	36 58	7 77		1 68
Sewing machine	100 00	94 44	86 20	71 34
Telephone	46 34	26 66	13 90	15.73
Vacuum cleaner	17 07	1 11		
Totals	275 33	157 74	100 10	98 30
Per cent of ideal standard <sup>a</sup>	33 9	17 5	11 1	10 9

<sup>a</sup> According to an ideal standard, every home in the community would have each of these conveniences

TABLE 39—PERCENTAGE OF HOMES OF OWNERS AND TENANTS PROVIDED WITH CERTAIN HOUSEHOLD CONVENIENCES<sup>17</sup>

Kind of Convenience	2871 Owners	1973 Tenants
Running water in houses	19 6	7 4
Bathrooms	18 0	5 7
Indoor toilets	12 9	4 4
Electric or gas lighting systems	17 7	8 0
Central heating systems	8 1	4 1
Refrigeration	20 7	26 7
Oil stove for cooking	41 9	28 8
Vacuum cleaners	11 7	6 7

But tenant farming has other effects on family life which are even more significant than its effects on any phase of housing. For example, the North Carolina survey showed that 89 per cent of the mothers in the more than 1000 farm families studied worked in the field. In the Sikeston Community, 66.66 per cent of the tenant parents kept their children out of school to hire out away from home, and in this same district, the mothers in 45.1 per cent of the cropper families had been married as early as fourteen

<sup>16</sup> Unpublished data by Carl C Taylor, Fred R Yoder, and C C Zimmerman.

<sup>17</sup> Quoted from *Separate Form Yearbook*, 1923, No 897, p 582

years of age. Apparently these girls seek to escape the "humdrum" monotony of their parents' homes at an early age, but in the great majority of cases the homes they establish are equally humdrum.

The amount of money a family expends on various consumption goods is no measure of either its well-being or its happiness, but a comparison of such expenditures does give a basis for comparing the standards of living of various families. Although this was discussed at some length in Chapter VIII, it is brought up at this point for emphasis. Practically every survey of farm family living conditions has shown that tenant families have a much smaller budget to expend on their standard of living, and because of this, a large percentage must—and does—go for food and clothing. This leaves not only a smaller proportion, but also a smaller amount of money, for health, education, religion, recreation, etc. No one has to do more than consider his own interests, zest and happiness to know that this constitutes a real menace to well-being and is bound to be a cause of dissatisfaction to anyone thus situated; and no amount of philosophizing—that these things must be, and that such conditions are economically productive for the nation at large—can eradicate this stern dictate of psychology.

The following three tables compare the restricted standard of living of tenant and owner families on the basis of particular items, and all these tables tell the same story—a restricted and handicapped social life among farm tenant families. Other items in the standard of living might have been substituted, for regardless of the one chosen, the trend is the same as shown here.

TABLE 40.—PERCENTAGE OF FARM OWNER AND TENANT FAMILIES TAKING VARIOUS CLASSES OF PERIODICALS TEN SURVEYS<sup>12</sup>

	Number of Families	Percentage of All Families Taking				
		Dailies	Agricultural Papers	Weeklies	Magazines	Others
White owners	1593	70 8	60 9	59 8	43 2	5 7
White tenants	1493	55 1	46 7	29 9	28 8	4 1

<sup>12</sup> *Separate Form Yearbook, 1923, No. 897, pp. 579-580.* Data from surveys in Ohio, North Carolina, Nebraska, Texas, Kentucky, and Tennessee.

TABLE 41 —PERCENTAGE OF OWNERS, TENANTS, AND CROPPERS HAVING AUTOMOBILES, TELEPHONES, AND RURAL FREE DELIVERY<sup>29</sup>

Tenure Class	Automobiles	Telephones	Rural Free Delivery
Share croppers	16 4	20 0	86 0
Share tenants	45 9	47 4	85 0
Owner additional	80 8	69 2	96 0
Owner operator	74 4	59 0	90 5

TABLE 42 —PERCENTAGE OF OWNER AND TENANT FAMILIES ATTENDING RECREATIONAL EVENTS DURING ONE YEAR'S TIME<sup>30</sup>

Class	One Kind of Event	Two Kinds of Events	Three Kinds of Events	Four Kinds of Events	More than Four Kinds	None
Owners	89 2	81 2	69 2	46 6	26 6	10 8
Tenants	75 1	61 0	41 9	19 8	8 0	24 9

**Poor Social Institutions.**—Every phase of institutional life in a community is adversely affected by the presence of any great number of farm tenant families. These landless farm families cannot and do not give as liberal financial support to social institutions as owner families, and, furthermore, their failure to participate in the community's institutional life is an even greater handicap to the work of these institutions than the lack of financial support.

A tenant population is nearly always a shifting one. The 1920 census showed that 43.4 per cent of all the tenants had been on the farm they were then occupying less than two years, and that scarcely one-quarter (25.4 per cent) had lived on their present farm for five years or over. The shifting is greatest in the "cropper" belt and, according to these data, slightly greater among white than colored tenants. However, not all of them leave the community, for a great majority move to other neighboring

<sup>29</sup> Sanders, J. T., "Farm Ownership and Tenancy in the Black Prairie of Texas," *Bulletin No. 1068*, United States Department of Agriculture, Washington, D. C., p. 55.

<sup>30</sup> Taylor, Carl C., and Zimmerman, C. C., *op. cit.*, pp. 26-82.

farms.<sup>81</sup> Table 43 tabulates the 1920 census data on the length of tenure, and other and more recent studies substantiate these

TABLE 43.—PERCENTAGE OF TENANTS BY NUMBER OF YEARS ON FARM, BY GEOGRAPHIC DIVISIONS, 1920<sup>82</sup>

Division	Less than 2 Years	2 to 4 Years	5 to 9 Years	10 Years and Over
United States. . . . .	43 4	31 2	14 6	10 8
New England	35 5	28 9	17 9	17 7
Middle Atlantic	33 1	31 2	18 6	17 1
East North Central	31 4	31 8	20 2	16 6
West North Central	37 4	33 4	17 8	11 3
South Atlantic	44 4	31 0	13 6	11 0
East South Central	47 2	30 2	12 5	10 1
West South Central	51 6	30 2	11 3	6 9
Mountain	50 7	32 9	11 0	5 4
Pacific	45 0	32 4	14 5	8 0

data.<sup>83</sup> But the significant fact in this is that tenants are an unstable population element in community life, and hence an unstable institutional constituency.

Educational institutions are greatly handicapped in tenant sections. Tenants are poor and need their children's help with the work, at the instruction of their landlord, they do not vote for high school taxes, and they often move away in the middle of the school year. Such conditions jeopardize the education of the tenant's children as well as that of all the other children in the community. Sanders found that, in the Black Prairie of Texas, the average school grades attained by tenant farmers and their wives and children were always lower than those for the owners.<sup>84</sup> E. V. White found that in the Texas counties where the tenancy rate was high, the school terms were shorter, the enrollment was comparatively low, and the daily attendance was poorer. He also studied school attainment, and found that that for owners—whether fathers, mothers, or children—was almost exactly twice that for croppers. In cropper families of moderate financial con-

<sup>81</sup> Gray, L. C., *et al.*, "Farm Ownership and Tenancy," *Year Book of Agriculture*, Washington, D. C., 1923, pp. 507 ff.

<sup>82</sup> Taylor, C. C., and Zimmerman, C. C., *op cit.* p. 137.

<sup>83</sup> See Brannen, C. O., "Relation of Land Tenure to Plantation Organization," *Bulletin No. 1269*, United States Department of Agriculture, 1924.

<sup>84</sup> Sanders, J. T., *op cit.*

dition, neither parent nor any of the children over 21 years of age had attained an average school status of fifth grade<sup>35</sup> A North Carolina survey showed that 31.3 per cent of the landless parents had never attended school, as against only 8.2 per cent of the owners<sup>36</sup> Similar results have been found wherever specific studies have been made, although there is a wide variation in the difference between the two tenure classes for the various sections of the country

Religious institutions are no less handicapped by tenancy than are educational institutions, for every survey shows that tenants attend fewer religious services, belong to a church less frequently, and contribute less to its support, than do owners A survey of four counties in northwestern Ohio revealed that only 13.4 per cent of the tenants' names were on church membership lists in the community, but that 86.6 per cent of the owners were church members<sup>37</sup> A study in Johnson County, Missouri, showed that 40.7 per cent of the owners and only 29.6 per cent of the tenants were church members, and that 30.5 per cent of the owner families attended Sunday school, as against 18.5 per cent of the tenant families The owners contributed 2.9 times as much per person to the church's support as did the tenants<sup>38</sup> In the Sikeston Community in this state, 71.36 per cent of the owners, 52.56 per cent of the tenants, 35.03 per cent of the hired men, and 23.81 per cent of the croppers attended church, and about the same ratio was maintained in Sunday school attendance It must be remembered that in this community hired men and croppers are an established part of the tenancy system, and constitute about 50 per cent of its tenant population In this community the tenants contributed one-quarter as much to church support as the owners did, as against one-fourteenth and one-fifteenth for the croppers and hired men, respectively The natural results of such conditions are that only one of the country churches had a resident pastor, and three of the six rural churches of the community had

<sup>35</sup> White, E. V., and Davis, E. E., "A Study of Rural Schools in Texas," *University of Texas Extension Series*, No. 62, Austin, 1914.

<sup>36</sup> Taylor, C. C., and Zimmerman, C. C., *op cit*

<sup>37</sup> *Ohio Rural Life Survey*, Northwestern Ohio, pp. 40-42, Department of Church and Country Life, Board of Home Missions, Presbyterian Church, New York

<sup>38</sup> Johnson, O. R., and Ford, W. E., "Land Tenure," *Bulletin No. 212*, Missouri Agricultural Experiment Station, Columbia, 1917

been abandoned or closed. There were neither Bibles nor any other type of religious literature in 60 of the lower-tenure homes in this community.

Brunner speaks as follows of the influence of tenancy on the church: "With the one-year lease which prevails [in the south], tenancy means a shifting population; and it is difficult to establish or maintain enduring churches or social institutions in counties in which the tenancy rate is high. More than one promising co-operative organization in the South, and many rural churches, have been laid low by the restlessness of the tenant farmer."<sup>39</sup> Ormond's detailed study of rural churches in North Carolina shows that the value of the church buildings in the six counties with the highest tenancy rate was only 1.4 per cent of the annual crop value, as against 24.2 per cent for the six counties with the lowest rate.<sup>40</sup>

The fact that the presence of any great number of tenants in a community lowers the home, church and school life of that community is sufficient evidence of the fact that tenancy is a menace to the social life of any community. But the evils of tenancy do not stop with the major social institutions, for better road movements, lodges, and other civic and recreational organizations are all affected. Even neighborhood visiting was infrequent among the lower-tenure operators in the Sikeston Community, about 27 per cent of them never visiting neighbors of even their own tenure status, and about 42 per cent visiting their neighbors no oftener than once a month. The percentage of average attendance at community gatherings was 12.25 for tenants, 8.73 for hired men, and 7.79 for croppers, as against 16.34 for owners; the percentage of membership in civic or fraternal organizations was 5.5 for tenants and 3.8 for hired men, as against over 70 for the owners; no croppers belonged to these organizations. Less than 75 per cent of the members of the lower-tenure groups voted regularly, as against over 92 per cent of the owners; and less than 4 per cent and 3 per cent of the croppers and hired men, respectively, had ever held any civic office, such offices as they did hold being equally divided between the school and the church.

\* Brunner, E. de S., *Church Life in the Rural South*, Doubleday, Doran & Co., Inc., New York, 1923, pp. 25-26.

<sup>40</sup> Ormond, J. M., *The Country Church in North Carolina*, Duke University Press, Durham, 1931, p. 338.

**Unprogressive Communities.**—Tenants usually contribute very little to any community enterprise that calls for voluntary effort, for several reasons. Making a living requires the greater part of their time, and they hesitate to let their own business suffer in order to help with a community enterprise from which they expect to reap few benefits. Furthermore, few are assured of a sufficiently long tenure to make it individually profitable for them to contribute much to such enterprises as roads, civic buildings, and churches—projects which must be undertaken and maintained by voluntary subscription and work. Consequently a community whose tenant population is large fails not only to undertake such activities, but even to think about them. Each head of a family covered by the Sikeston survey was asked his opinion on the improvement of schools, churches, roads, cooperative marketing, scientific farming, and higher education, and a summary of the attitudes is given in Table 44. From this tabula-

TABLE 44—OPINIONS REGARDING DEFINITE COMMUNITY IMPROVEMENT (IN PERCENTAGES)<sup>41</sup>

Opinion	Owner	Tenant	Cropper	Hired Man
For improvement	87 11	73 81	46 77	46 79
Opposed to improvement	9 06	9 20	28 07	32 56
No opinion regarding improvement	3 83	16 99	25 16	20 55

tion of over 900 individual opinions, it is seen that 26 19 per cent of the tenants, 53 23 per cent of the croppers and 53 11 per cent hired men were either opposed to, or unconcerned with, the various improvements; that is, among the classes which constitute over 90 per cent of this community, there was little concern regarding the improvement of those things which contribute directly to upbuilding the community.

**Hereditary Tenancy.**—The study of the life histories of tenants shows quite generally that these people have been denied economic opportunities from birth. According to Goldenweiser and Truesdell, only 44 3 per cent of the total number of farm

<sup>41</sup> Unpublished manuscript by Carl C Taylor, F R Yoder, and C. C Zimmerman



owners in 1920 reported ever having been tenants.<sup>42</sup> In the Columbia Trade Area of Boone County, Missouri, it was found that 50.18 per cent of the owners had been helped to ownership, as against 19.58 per cent of the tenants, 20 per cent of the tenants being sons of tenants or non-landowners. According to the North Carolina survey, 70 per cent of the landless farmers were sons of landless men.

The Boone County survey showed that 63 per cent of the wealth holdings of the owners were either gifts, inherited, or the result of an increase in land values. These men had received gifts at an average age of 32 years, and it was these gifts and inheritances—their start toward land ownership—that made it possible for them to participate in the advance in land values. Only 20 per cent of the owners in the Sikeston Community had risen from a tenant status. Of the land owners covered by the North Carolina survey, only 27.8 per cent had been entirely landless, and 59 per cent of their wealth holdings at the time of the survey were acquired by gift, inheritance, or marriage.

In three tenancy studies, two in Missouri and one in North Carolina, the writer questioned approximately 1000 tenants as to why they were tenants rather than owners. Their answers varied all the way from "the lack of capital to buy a farm," "living on parents' or parents-in-law's farms which they later expected to inherit," or "afraid to risk buying," to "there is more money in renting."

Under present farming conditions and the present value of farm land, it is not only difficult, but practically impossible, for men to attain land ownership without financial assistance. Therefore it is to be expected that, to an even greater extent in the future than has been the case in the past, some men will be tenants simply because they do not inherit land or some other form of wealth.

#### THE SOLUTION OF THE PROBLEM OF TENANCY

The economic and social effects of farm tenancy have been sufficiently described to make it apparent that tenancy is one of the major rural problems in America today. Furthermore, unless it is attacked in some fundamental and drastic way, it is destined to be an even greater problem in the future. Even if, at present,

<sup>42</sup> Goldenweiser and Truesdell, *op cit.*, p. 109

there is apparently no way of solving this ever growing problem, there are economic policies which, if initiated and carried out on a state and national scale, will go far in its solution. Our difficulty is that we have as yet not recognized the possibility of a national system of farm tenancy. In the main, this country has not analyzed its causes or effects, but, where there has been some progress in such an analysis, the general public has refused to accept its conclusions because of our ideals of easy prosperity and because some people think that tenancy is necessary if farming is to be profitable. But when tenant farmers have come to constitute over half of our farm operators, when absentee landlords are even more numerous, and when the enlightenment of tenants has grown apace, only then shall we attack this problem and make some definite progress toward its solution.

**The Solution of the Tenancy Problem not Impossible.**—It would, indeed, be audacious to suggest that the difficult problem of tenancy can be solved, had no progress ever been made in this direction. The difficulty in this country is not that we refuse to acknowledge what has been done in England, Ireland, Denmark or New Zealand, but rather that we do not realize that tenancy is a problem of any magnitude in the United States, we still regard it as an individual rather than a social problem. American tenants lack the class consciousness of the tenants in England, Ireland, and Denmark. Nor are American landlords regarded as a class because of the fact that so few of them become owners by inheriting old family farm estates, and that they so readily and so habitually transfer their wealth holdings from land to other economic enterprises instead of becoming the country gentry or the overlords of the European countries. The almost complete absence of either one of these hereditary classes permits us to drift steadily into a system of land tenure, which has all the social consequences just described, with no consciousness that thereby a condition is arising which threatens community life and a problem is being created of which the public must and will eventually have a clear conception.

**Progress Made by Other Nations.**—An extreme belief in the inheritance of inequalities is the only theory of human nature under which the problem of tenancy can be held insoluble, and even this is not valid, as has been proved by Denmark. Fifty years ago, almost half of all the Danish farmers were poor, illiterate,

plodding tenants; today the children of this same stock are home-owning, enlightened, thrifty farmers. This transition has not taken place in a day, nor has it been due solely to the state aid given those aspiring to farm ownership; but the fact remains that it has come about within two generations and has been accomplished by people who had been hereditary tenants for generations and who were no more thrifty and enlightened than the countless American farm tenants of today, for whom many feel there is no hope.

We shall, however, make no attempt at giving the history or a complete economic analysis of all the land policies and programs by which other nations have helped their farmers to home ownership; we shall cite only enough examples and give only sufficient data to prove that, wherever the tenancy problem has been attacked, consistent progress has been made toward its solution.

Under a law passed in 1875, Denmark created land credit banks which were to receive state aid and whose function was to help men to the ownership of small farms; and supplementary laws passed in 1899, 1904, and 1909 established a complete system of state aid for landless men. These laws make possible a loan of nine-tenths of the purchase price of a small farm to any farm tenant or agricultural worker between twenty-five and fifty years of age, whose merit two people will guarantee. The interest rate is low (4 per cent), and the system of payment liquidates the debt at the end of forty-six and one-half years. No payment except the interest is required during the first five years, since the young farmer's need of money for farm improvement and operating capital is clearly recognized. During 1900-1916, 8200 families took advantage of these loans to the extent of \$12,500,000, all of which will be repaid as the men attain complete proprietorship of their farms. This movement, together with her cooperative credit unions, cooperative marketing associations, and universal education, has, within a period of about fifty years, made Denmark a nation of farm owners.

Although no such outstanding results have been achieved in England, considerable progress has been made in lessening farm tenancy since she first began her efforts to cope with this problem in the last decade of the nineteenth century. In 1883, John Rae estimated that no more than 5 per cent of the farmers in England owned the land they tilled; in 1895, the Royal Agricultural Com-

mission reported that no tenant could possibly become an owner because the interest rates on farm mortgages were higher than the rent charges, and as late as 1900, 86 per cent of all the land in crops was farmed by tenants. However, provision for helping landless men to ownership was made in the Small Holdings Act of 1892, and in supplementary acts passed in 1908 and 1910, and under these acts 130,526 individuals have become owners in six years' time. Since the World War, almost 10,000 other applicants have been approved under the Soldier Settlement Act.

Unqualified success has followed the honest attempt to reduce farm tenancy in Ireland. The Irish Land Purchase Act of 1903 made the transfer of land by the owner compulsory under certain conditions. The sum of \$500,000,000 was made available to the estate commission for financing the transfer of land, and \$60,000,000 was set aside to help tenants in making the 25-per-cent cash payment on farms. The Royal Commission was empowered to purchase the land on the appraisal value, and to sell it to tenant occupants on the basis of an annual payment of  $3\frac{1}{2}$  per cent, of which 3 per cent was interest, the remainder providing for the liquidation of the debt in sixty-eight and one-half years.

Under the laws of New Zealand, the state may take over large estates, subdivide them, and sublease them to farmers. A progressive or graduated land tax is levied on large estates, which, in the case of absentee landlords, is increased 50 per cent. Settlers can obtain long-term loans for making improvements. Thousands of farmers have been established on the land since these acts were passed, and large estates have been practically eliminated.

**Suggested Attacks on Farm Tenancy in the United States.**—The various types of farm tenants vary so widely in this country that it is difficult to formulate any broad program which will be equally applicable to every group. The cropper of the cotton states, for example, is often no more than a hired man who receives his wages in the form of a share of the crop he produces. He owns no work animals, no farm machinery and sometimes no household goods, and he furnishes none of the capital needed to operate the farm; he is usually financed by his landlord, even for his family's living expenses. He is seldom related to his landlord, this was true of only 9.7 per cent of the farm tenants in Mississippi in 1930, and in no state in the cotton belt was the percentage as high as 20.

The tenant in the middle west is in sharp contrast to the cropper of the cotton belt, for he very often pays a flat cash annual rental and is the independent operator of his farm during the period of his rent contract; he owns thousands of dollars' worth of live-stock, machinery and household equipment. He often is a relative of his landlord, the 1930 figures on this being: Indiana, 28 per cent; Illinois, 28.7 per cent; Minnesota, 31.5 per cent, Iowa, 32.1 per cent; Nebraska, 34.8 per cent; and Wisconsin, 38.6 per cent.

There are thousands of tenants whose status varies between these two extremes. The variation generally depends on what they are worth financially, but it is conditioned to some degree by the customs of the locality in which they live.

Every study of specific individuals who have risen from tenancy to ownership has shown that they have received financial assistance through inheritance, gift, or marriage; that they have been related to their landlords by blood or marriage, or that they have become owners when land prices were low. The financial assistance may have been slight, but if the farmer received it early in his career, it gave him a deed to a piece of land, the increase in the capital value of which represented a large portion of his capital worth later in life. In a survey covering 24,000 owners in 24 states, it was found that 18.8 per cent of their wealth was acquired by inheritance, gift, marriage, or homesteading.<sup>48</sup> This fact accounts for a large part of their present worth, in thousands of cases the "nest egg" with which they began was the differential between them and the others who have never risen to ownership and consequently have never increased their wealth by the subsequent rise in land values. Reports from 30,000 farmers in all sections of the country indicate that increased land values are responsible for 43 per cent of their capital worth. Obviously the first and most important step in helping men to ownership is to follow a scheme of financing which requires only a small initial payment and allows a long period of time for the liquidation of the balance with the profits from the enterprise. If this is done, these men will accumulate moderate estates from the increase in land values which is gradual, but almost inevitable, over a long period of time.

The comparative success of the farm tenants who are related

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<sup>48</sup> These figures are taken from all the studies referred to in this chapter which include this item.

to their landlords indicates that interested supervision has no small part in this success; and in this lies the second suggested attack on tenancy. The California and Australia settlement plans offer agricultural counsel as well as financial assistance, but in this country at present any such state aid and counsel is likely to be regarded as paternalistic. This type of service, however, is exactly what these men need to hold them up until they can get a firm agricultural and financial footing. If each of the thousands of county farm demonstration agents in the counties with high tenancy rates would make a serious and intelligent attempt to start one tenant toward ownership each year, their success would undoubtedly be as great in this line of endeavor as it has in others in the past fifteen years.

The third suggestion is a progressive land tax, such as has been adopted by New Zealand with good effect. A tax which increased in proportion to either the amount or the value of the land held, and which was levied on all men who own large estates or several farms and who do not farm or in any sense manage them directly, would induce these men to sell their land to tenant farmers who have considerable capital assets but can find no land for sale on the basis of its current productive value.

The fourth suggestion arises from the fact that in some sections tenancy is tending to decrease. In sixteen states—Delaware, Virginia, Maryland, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Ohio, Michigan, New York, Rhode Island, Vermont, Connecticut, Massachusetts, Maine, New Hampshire, West Virginia, and California—the tenancy rate was lower in 1930 than in 1900. The 1930 rates were lower than those in some one previous decade since 1900 in Indiana, Arizona, Oregon, and Washington, that for Oregon being the same for both 1930 and 1900. Farm tenancy showed a fairly constant decline in the New England and Middle Atlantic states from decade to decade between 1900 and 1930. The causes of these trends were undoubtedly many and varied, and their detailed study by an agency like the United States Department of Agriculture would unquestionably afford invaluable information for a systematic attack on the problem of farm tenancy as a whole.

In conclusion, it should again be emphasized that, regardless of the arguments, true or false, which are brought forward in behalf of tenant farming, we cannot afford to look with complacency on the fact that there are over 2,000,000 farm tenant

families in this country, that their number is increasing each year, and that their standard of living is lower than can be permitted in a nation whose culture is determined to a large extent by the type of rural civilization it builds

### QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

- 1 Discuss the statement, "Since tenancy is a normal step toward ownership, we should expect to have a large number of tenants"
- 2 Why are there so few tenants in New England, and so many in the south?
- 3 Which is the most significant measure of farm tenancy (a) the percentage of farm operators who are tenants, (b) the percentage of the total acreage farmed by tenants, or (c) the percentage of the total farm wealth under tenant management?
- 4 If it is true that there is a positive relationship between high land values and high tenancy rates, how do you account for the fact that the average value per farm unit is lowest in the East South Central division, but that the tenancy rate in this division is higher than in any other section in the country?
- 5 Why has Mississippi the highest rate of farm tenancy in the United States? Explain fully.
- 6 Discuss the statement, "The sections of the country which have a high tenancy rate are the rural slums of America."
- 7 What is meant by the so-called "hereditary tenancy"? Why is it of such great social significance?
- 8 To what do you attribute the lack of concern regarding tenancy in this country?
- 9 Do you believe that this country would be better off if, instead of the tenants, which include 75 per cent of our farmers, there were a land-owning peasantry?
- 10 What do you propose as a solution to the farm tenancy problem?

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## CHAPTER XII

### THE RURAL FAMILY

#### THE FAMILY—A RURAL INSTITUTION

**The Family as a Social Institution.**—The family is one of the major social institutions and ranks with, or above, the state, the school, the church, and industry in its significance in organized social life. Its primary function is to rear children to manhood and womanhood, physically, mentally, and morally, and thus, in its influence on the life of every individual, it supersedes and antedates all other social institutions. In this sense it is a primary social institution, but it is primary in another sense also, for practically every ordinary form of human relationship and adjustment, and every activity of life is found in, and is a necessary part of, family life. Both sexes and widely varying ages are present in the family. The home sees the assimilation by the children of the religious and other attitudes expressed by the adult members; here courtesy, obedience, loyalty, altruism, team work, manners, ideas, ideals and ambitions are largely developed. A great deal of education takes place in the home, and many times an occupation is learned there. Economic problems are discussed there, and the younger members of the family are likely to be called on to participate in such discussions and the solution of these problems. In other words, almost every type of problem which children will have to face in after years arises, is discussed and resolved, in one way or another, within the family circle.

It is in the family that the child becomes an ultimate participant in the regular and usual practices of society, for from infancy it is taught what it should and should not do, what it must and must not do. An infant has no conception of the rights of others, of fairness and justice, of manners and customs. These concepts are learned gradually, a large part of them by example and precept in the long period of life at home. The child learns at home to treat others, regardless of age and sex, with courtesy

and fairness; justice for the members of the family is almost universal. It learns the need of division of labor in the performance of the family's common tasks. As a rule, there is a fair distribution of the economic income among the various members of the family. Solicitude for the other members of the family not only is developed in home life but lasts long after the family is scattered. In short, the home, if it fulfills all these functions, is a training place for life, for a child's character and personality are formed largely within it, and the development of character and personality is more important than any other thing he may learn later.

Practically every nation recognizes the necessity of safeguarding the home and family life of its people in order that the contributions of the home to society may be assured. In the legal sense, marriage is a civil contract and therefore breaking that contract (divorce) must be sanctioned by law. Laws are passed penalizing anyone who jeopardizes the survival and wholesomeness of family life; the violation of the sex integrity of the home is sometimes punishable by death. Parents are made legally responsible for the acts of their children until the age of majority is reached. But, as is altogether too well proved by the disintegration of the American family, neither the family's integrity, wholesomeness nor its contributions to society can be insured by law, and consequently influences other than law will have to be depended on to preserve the home and all that has just been described as its contributions to our larger social life.

**The Farm Family as a Social Unit.**—The rural family, in comparison with the urban, is unique in two respects: (1) the importance and influence of the home in rural life in comparison and in competition with other social institutions is far greater; and (2) the rural home performs all the functions described in the preceding section of this chapter more completely than does the urban home. The lives and activities of rural people center about the home, the parents are partners in business, and even the children participate in the farm economic enterprise to some extent. Marriage occurs earlier among rural people, and divorces are less frequent. The parental contact is more constant, and parental influence is therefore greater than in the city home. Farm children receive a comparatively large portion of their education

at home, and very often serve their occupational apprenticeship there. Children can be taught industry on the farm under their parents' direction, performing tasks suited to their strength and free from the factory's menacing routine and drive. Rural people spend more of their leisure time in their homes. The rural home is an individual unit, not a tenement or an apartment house. It is for these reasons that the farm home and family life are tremendously important, both to rural life and to national and world life.

The significance of the farm family as a social unit is twofold, for both advantages and disadvantages are apparent in the family's constant and restricted association. The advantages are:

1. Farm parents really bring up their own children, whereas city children grow up in close contact with the neighborhood, the street, and other outside institutions. In the country the home influence is constant and the home environment is stable. Parents and children become a part of each other, for they eat together, play together, work together, and sit together around the fireplace or stove in the winter time. This close association deepens their love and regard for one another.

2. The moral integrity of the farm family is traditional, and the children are reared in these rigid moral concepts.

3. Family relationships and family social ethics provide good patterns for almost every other human relationship, and the farm child sees and benefits by their practical application in the farm home.

On the other hand, there are the following disadvantages:

1. The farm family is often a closed corporation in ideas and ideals. It is altruistic where its own members are concerned, but selfish in relation to all other people.

2. Social concepts are built on a very narrow and inflexible base. This is bound to be the case when the home absorbs so large a part of the time of every member of the family that no opportunity arises to meet and associate with others.

3. This strict adherence to family associations results in a clannishness which, in the more isolated districts, has led to feuds.

4. Adjustments within the family are both continuous and personal, and tend to level the personalities of all the members of the family group. Thus, a child who has a peculiar temperament

or a marked talent often fails to receive proper consideration. It may be this leveling process that is responsible to some extent for the orthodoxy and conservatism of rural people.

If the rural family is narrow and restricted in its ideas and ideals, if it is mercenary, if it lacks recreation, art, beauty, education, religion, income, sanitation—in other words, any of the facilities for physical, mental and cultural life and development—rural life will be handicapped even more than urban life under these same conditions. All the elements in the rural standard of living are sometimes furnished by the family, at any rate, they are derived from the family to a much greater degree than is true of the urban standard, for in urban life many other agencies and institutions have become substitutes for the family in supplying these elements.

**The Farm Family as an Economic Unit.**—During the handicraft stage of production, the family as a whole constituted the labor unit in every occupation, but with the development of the power and factory system of production it rapidly gave way to larger and more shifting labor units. However, the family as a unit of labor has persisted in agriculture, and farming is practically the only occupation in this country at present in which this is still the case. Every member of the farm family assists in the one enterprise as long as he is a member of the farm household. This country's entire manufacturing industries are carried on in about 300,000 plants, and in many cases men have business interests in more than one plant. Agriculture, on the other hand, is carried on in something over 6,000,000 business units, a farm family generally representing a unit. This scheme of business enterprise is both advantageous and disadvantageous to the members of the farm family, to the family as a social institution, and to society. Some of the advantages that accrue are

1. The parents are partners in the economic enterprise and consequently have reciprocal relations and sympathies which are lost to some degree when there is no such partnership.

2. The reasons for the prosperity or failure of the enterprise are understood by all the family, and the necessary adjustments to these fluctuations are made by the entire family. It is this which accounts in no small way for the ability of the rural standard of living to adjust itself to the severe tests which confront it in times of crop failure and price depression.

3 The children can learn farm work without the dangerous effects which result from child labor under a boss. Tasks can be fitted to their age and strength, and any adjustment in work can be made whenever necessary. In addition, they have the benefit of the patience and sympathy of their parents in learning to work.

4 Sharing in the work and the economic responsibility tends to knit the family together more closely in all the other interests and activities of life.

The disadvantages of the family as a unit of labor are:

1. Since the economic returns are not definite in farming as they are under a wage system, this tends to drive the whole family to overwork in order that those returns may be increased.

2. The mother's work is often entirely too heavy, especially when she helps with the farm chores and field work in addition to her regular household duties.

3. Children are valuable labor assets, and this means that both education and recreation suffer. Their attendance at school is irregular because their farm work interferes, and they are often not sent to high school because the parents feel it is impossible to spare them from the farm's labor force. In addition, they are called on for help in farm or household work to the exclusion of the necessary opportunities for play and recreation.

4 Farm children have little or no opportunity to choose and learn any other occupation unless they leave home, and this means that they cannot start to learn other work until they are old enough to leave home.

**The Status of the Farm Wife and Mother.**—According to Butterfield, "Woman's place in farm life is the severest test that agriculture has to face. If farm life cannot give the farm woman opportunity for real growth, for something besides drudgery, our rural civilization cannot go on. Nevertheless, the farm woman's career will always be found largely in the home itself, and she rises or not, just as the farm home becomes what it ought to be."<sup>1</sup>

The rôle of the farm wife and mother is extremely diversified and of great importance. She is the manager of the home, looking out for the consumption needs and habits of each member of her family; she acts as personal servant and adviser for all, and as

<sup>1</sup> *Proceedings, Sixth National Country Life Conference*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1923, p. 6

the constant companion, guardian and tutor of the children. In spite of all her varied tasks, she must remain all that the word "mother" implies—the provider of happiness and well-being for her children—and, if possible, also be an optimistic helpmate and companion for her husband. As Martha Foote Crow says:

The woman who is to administer in the farm home must be equal to several women. She must be master in the difficult art of cookery, adapting her means to the welfare of a group of people of all ages, and with all kinds of needs. She must be wash woman and laundry woman, cleaning and scrub woman. She must know all the chemicals to be applied to the cleansing of different kinds of metal, cloth, wood, and every sort of surface, painted and unpainted. She must be food expert, and textile expert, machine and poison expert. Besides all this, she must be teacher, instructor, and entertainer, the encyclopedia and gazetteer, a theological and philosophical professor. And all these separate functions must do their work together within one personality, the administrator, the little mother of the home, the companion of the kitchen, the parlor, and the bedside.<sup>2</sup>

According to Gillette, in 1909 the value of the butter, cheese, eggs, and fowls produced by farm women exceeded the value of this country's entire wheat crop by several million dollars.<sup>3</sup> The United States Department of Agriculture in 1919 made a survey of 10,044 farm homes in thirty-three northern and western states, and found that 25 per cent of the farm women helped with livestock, 24 per cent worked in the fields, 56 per cent cared for gardens, and 36 per cent helped with the milking. Only 14 per cent of these women had any hired help, and it averaged only 3.6 months per year.<sup>4</sup> But there are many sections of the country in which women do even more work in the fields than is indicated by this survey.

A recent study made in Oregon shows that the average working day of farm women of that state averaged 9 hours and 6 minutes; of that time 7 hours and 21 minutes were spent in housework, 1 hour and 37 minutes in farm work, and 8 minutes

<sup>2</sup> Crow, M. F., *The American Country Girl*, Frederick A. Stokes Company, New York, 1915, pp. 149-150.

<sup>3</sup> Gillette, J. M., *Rural Sociology*, pp. 371-372.

<sup>4</sup> Ward, Florence E., "The Farm Woman's Problems," *Department Circular No. 148*, United States Department of Agriculture, November, 1920.

in other work.<sup>5</sup> This is a longer working day than that for most women in other occupations and professions, furthermore, these figures apply to a seven-day week, whereas a five-and-one-half or six-day week is the rule in other occupations.<sup>6</sup>

It is not to be wondered at that the farm woman is not always contented with her life. Notwithstanding her important part in family life, she is likely to have little home equipment and few conveniences with which to work, as is shown by Table 45.<sup>7</sup> She

TABLE 45—SOME HOUSEHOLD DUTIES OF THE FARM WOMAN<sup>8</sup>

Section of Country	Rooms to Care For, Number	Stoves to Care For, Number	Care for Kerosene Lamps, Per Cent	Carry Water		Do Own Washing, Per Cent	Do Own Sewing, Per Cent	Daily Mending, Hours	Do Own Bread Baking, Per Cent
				Per Cent	Distance, Feet				
Eastern	9 7	1 3	81	54	23	94	86	0 5	89
Central	7 7	1 3	79	68	41	97	94	6	97
Western	5 3	1 1	74	57	65	97	93	5	97
Average	7 8	1 29	79	61	39	96	92	6	94
Country-wide number of records	9781	9224	9896	6511	6708	9767	9724	8001	9614

lives pretty much within the four walls of her own home, her nearest neighbor lives at some distance, the institutional and service facilities from which she can get help and inspiration are miles away, as is apparent from Table 46, and she has little, if any, opportunity to build up and develop her own personality by means of outside contacts. Is it surprising, then, that many farm women

<sup>5</sup> Wilson, Maude, "Use of Time by Oregon Farm Home Makers," *Station Bulletin 256*, Oregon Agricultural Experiment Station, Corvallis, 1929, p. 14.

<sup>6</sup> Miss Wilson calls attention to the fact that her studies show a slightly longer average working day than do other studies, and she accounts for this because she included non-typical days in her study, whereas other studies included only typical days and weeks. She makes the point that it is in the non-typical days and weeks that extra hours are most often required.

<sup>7</sup> The statistics in Chapter XIV will indicate that the farm woman's work has been somewhat lightened by the increase in the number of farm homes in which running water and electric lights have been installed.

<sup>8</sup> Ward, Florence E., "The Farm Woman's Problems," *Department Circular No. 148*, United States Department of Agriculture, November, 1920.

TABLE 46—DISTANCES, AUTOMOBILES, AND TELEPHONES\*

Section of Country	Miles to District School	Miles to High School	Miles to Church	Miles to Market	Miles to Family Doctor	Miles to Nearest Hospital	Miles to Nearest Trained Nurse	Family Used Automobile, Per Cent	Homes Having Phones, Per Cent
Eastern . . .	1 2	4 3	1 9	3 1	3 5	12 8	9 9	48	67
Central	1 6	5 1	2 6	4 6	4 9	12 7	11 8	73	85
Western	1 7	9 6	5 1	7 7	10 4	17 7	15 5	62	56
Average	1 5	5 9	2 9	4 8	5 7	13 9	11 9	62	72
Average number of records	9627	9767	9726	9708	9837	9605	9463	9545	9748

\* *Ibid.*



develop eccentricities such as scolding and nagging, and strive to keep their daughters from repeating the lives they have lived?

The following quotation, "Sideights from the Survey," is taken from the report of the Department of Agriculture's survey of 10,044 farms cited above.

Farm women love the country and do not want to give up its freedom for city life, but they want normal living and working conditions in the farm home because of the shortage of help prevalent throughout the country. They consider it especially important that, as far as possible, modern equipment and machinery do the work which would otherwise fall to women.

The farm woman does not wish to put up with an unsatisfactory today in anticipation of a better tomorrow, or a better old age. She feels that she owes it to herself and her family to keep informed, attractive, and in harmony with life as years advance.

Women realize that no amount of scientific arrangement or labor-saving appliances will of themselves make a home. Women want time salvaged from housekeeping to create the right home atmosphere for their children, and so to enrich their home surroundings that they may gain their ideals of beauty and their tastes for books and music not from the shop windows, the movies, the billboards, or the jazz band, but from the home environment.

The farm woman knows that there is no one who can take her place as teacher and companion of her children during the early impressionable years, and she craves more time for their care. The home exists for the child, hence the child's development should have first consideration. Farm women want to broaden their outlook and keep up with the advancement of their children, not by courses of study, but by bringing progressive ideas, methods, and facilities into the everyday work and recreation of the home environment.

The farm woman feels her isolation from neighbors, as well as from libraries and other means of keeping in touch with outside life. "The farmer," she declares, "deals much with other men. The children form associations at school, but we, because of our narrow range of duties and distance from neighbors, form the habit of staying at home, and, to a greater degree than is commonly supposed, feel the need of congenial companionship."

**The Marital Status of Rural People.**—There are certain generally accepted beliefs regarding rural people and marriage. For example, marriage is supposed to take place at an earlier age and in greater percentages among rural boys and girls than among urban, divorce is held to be much less prevalent; desertion is prac-

tically unknown in rural families, and what may be called "familism" prevails throughout every aspect of rural life. We have inferred as much in the preceding sections of this chapter, and it is now our purpose to present briefly statistical data which will warrant these beliefs.

In 1930, the rural non-farm population showed the highest proportion of married men, 61.1 per cent, as against 60.5 per cent for the urban, and 57.9 per cent for the rural farm population. But 66.0 per cent of the women in the rural farm population were married, as against 63.9 per cent in the rural non-farm and 58.5 per cent in the urban population.<sup>10</sup> The percentage of married males and females 15 years of age and over was 60 and 61.1 respectively.<sup>11</sup> It is thus apparent that rural males fall below and that rural females exceed the national average percentage of the total number of people married. In 1920 the rural percentages exceeded the urban for both males and females, although at that time the urban percentage exceeded the rural for males in New England, the East North Central, the West North Central, the Mountain and the Pacific states. By detailed calculation Groves and Ogburn found that in 1920 there were 11.5 per cent more married people in the country than in the city.<sup>12</sup>

There are few data on the age of marriage. However, Thompson has assembled some facts on this point in his study of New York, and Table 47 presents his analysis.

TABLE 47—PERCENTAGES OF BRIDES IN NEW YORK (OUTSIDE OF NEW YORK CITY) MARRYING AT GIVEN AGES IN URBAN AND RURAL COMMUNITIES<sup>13</sup>

Age of Marriage	Urban	Rural
15-19	21.5	27.3
20-24	39.0	37.0
25-29	19.8	17.3
30-34	8.3	6.6
35-39	4.8	4.1
40-44	2.8	2.5

<sup>10</sup> Bureau of Census Release, August 31, 1931.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, Census Abstract, vol. 11, October 6, 1931, pp. 268-271.

<sup>12</sup> Groves, E. R., and Ogburn, W. F., *American Marriage and Family Relationships*, Henry Holt and Company, Inc., New York, 1928, p. 328.

<sup>13</sup> Thompson, W. S., "Rural Demography," *Publications of the American Sociological Society*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, vol. xix, p. 152.

If Thompson's data can be accepted as representative, the general belief that marriage occurs earlier among rural than among urban boys and girls is apparently true, and Groves and Ogburn's findings, presented in Table 48, substantiate this. Sorokin and

TABLE 48—PERCENTAGE OF MALES AND FEMALES OF EARLY AGE GROUPS, URBAN AND RURAL, WHO ARE MARRIED<sup>14</sup>

Age Groups	Percentage Married	
	Urban	Rural
Males, 15-19 years	1 6	2 4
Females, 15-19 years	10 4	14 5
Males, 20-24 years	25 8	31 1
Females, 20-24 years	47 6	58 4

Zimmerman show that this tendency is not restricted to the United States, but prevails in other countries as well<sup>15</sup>

Census data indicate also that the divorce rate is lower in rural than in urban areas, and that there are fewer widowed people living in rural than in urban districts. There is 1 divorced woman for every 114 married women in rural districts, and for every 80 married women in urban districts, there is 1 divorced man for every 81 married men in rural districts and for every 110 married men in urban districts. In the lower age groups the urban divorce rates for both males and females greatly exceed the rural. Sorokin and Zimmerman present the data in Table 49.

They go on to say that, "As a general conclusion, we may say that the stability of the family, as a union of parents, in the cities and industrial districts is considerably less than in rural districts"<sup>16</sup>

**Rural and Urban Familism Contrasted.**—The rural family is more stable than the urban family, but the causes for this can be only a matter of inference and opinion. The following categorical list presents some causes which have been suggested:

1 The rural family functions more completely as an independent economic and social unit.

<sup>14</sup> Groves and Ogburn, *op. cit.*, p. 230.

<sup>15</sup> See Sorokin, P. A., and Zimmerman, C. C., *op. cit.*, chap. x.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 336

TABLE 49.—NUMBER OF MARRIAGES PER ONE DIVORCE<sup>17</sup>

Population Unit	State	Urban	Ten Non-urban Countries
California	5 2		10 5
Los Angeles		4 5	
San Francisco		3 4	
Illinois	5 7		7 0
Chicago		4 8	
Maryland	16 0		29 3
Baltimore City		6 5	
Michigan	4 9		23 2
Detroit		3 9	
Minnesota	8 9		10 5
Minneapolis		4 7	
St Paul		7 1	
Missouri	4 2		5 9
St Louis		3 0	
Kansas City		2 4	
Virginia	7 2		16 0
Richmond		4 6	
New York	23 6		15 7
New York City		26 8	

2 The rural family until recently—and even yet in some cases—has been more isolated

3 The birth rate is higher for the rural family; there are more children per family, and fewer childless families.

4 The rural family clings longer and more tenaciously to old traditions, and familism is a tradition.

5 The wife is likely to be more subjected to her husband in rural than in urban life

#### THE IMPROVEMENT OF AMERICAN RURAL FAMILY LIFE

**Is the Farm Family in Special Need of Uplift?**—Some modern minds question the traditional belief that the preservation of family life is essential to the integrity and progress of national

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, p 336

life and civilization. Regardless of the view held, there can be little doubt that the rural family is more stable and integrated than the city family, for, as has been said previously, familism is a powerful tradition among rural people

Granted this stability and integration of the rural family, many undesirable conditions still prevail in rural housing, family organization and family traditions. The rural home and family, child welfare, and parent education must be included in any rural improvement program, for the fact that members of the farm family are in such constant and close contact with one another makes it desirable that each one, the parents in particular, be trained for his or her part in the home. Rural women need to be relieved of drudgery, rural children need the influence and inspiration of wider cultural contacts. There is great need for a knowledge of child training, for farm parents have a greater responsibility in child guidance than city parents. Farm women need a greater knowledge of dietetics than do urban women. However, we do not mean to imply that an average rural family suffers in comparison with millions of urban families, but we do believe that, in addition to the environmental, economic and social advantages inherent in rural life, there should be offered the opportunity to participate in every other educational and cultural advantage which will improve child welfare and home life.

The case for the rural home was well stated by the sub-committee on Education and Guidance of the Rural and Village Committee of the President's Conference on Home Building and Home Ownership: "The welfare and happiness of rural people must be the ultimate goal of the Committee on Farm and Village Housing. Adequate rural homes are the only foundation on which rural welfare and happiness can securely rest . . . Any attempts, however unconscious, to use the Committee's work or materials in ways that make the welfare of rural people secondary in importance to any other interest must be jealously guarded against."<sup>18</sup>

The foregoing statement of objectives in no way runs counter to the welfare of the nation as a whole, as the following excerpt tends to prove:

<sup>18</sup> President's Conference on Home Building and Home Ownership, *Tentative Report of the Committee on Farm and Village Housing*, Sub-committee on Educational Guidance, Washington, D. C., December, 1931, Appendix I, Section D

The rural American home has for generations made and still continues to make contributions to our national life which can be had in no other way. It has reared men and women of self-reliance, resourcefulness, rugged character, and idealism. Throughout history it has been in the substantial rural populations that nations have found their best hope of survival. The good rural home is recognized as the best place for the upbringing of children; witness the struggles and sacrifices of millions of parents to provide country conditions during the growing years of their families, though employed in the city. The great accessions which our population has received from immigration are over, temporarily, and the birth rates are falling. It is not without significance that the number of rural children per thousand of rural population is still considerably greater than the number of urban children per thousand of urban population.

The hazards, both physical and moral, are less in the adequate country home than in the city home of similar level; the conditions under which country children live, together with the contributions from the well-conducted farm to the family's food and fuel, make possible the rearing of children at much less money cost than in the city.

The house itself is an important factor in the rural family life. It may build into the lives of its occupants a sense of security, of comfort, of beauty, of orderliness, and of healthfulness, or by its very failure to incorporate the qualities that enable these attributes, it may produce lives out of proportion, starved, and deficient. Because the rural house is, after and often during its first construction, a product of the care and handicraft of its occupants, it is a satisfying medium of creative self-expression. In its maintenance and in the fineness of its care one finds the expression of character and aspiration of the occupants.

Ownership of the rural home or, lacking ownership, long-tenure leasehold that enables improvement of the house and of the home which it shelters, is most desirable. The things which are done to the physical house have their counterpart in the less tangible qualities of the home. Although love of home is amazingly strong in many instances where the house is inadequate and ugly, it will be greater still if the home combines the qualities of utility and beauty. Such a home appeals to the finer appreciations and stimulates the higher levels of living. Certain it is that family life, which is the most invaluable care of life itself, cannot reach its best realization if either home functioning or house facility is so inadequate as to present constant peril, privation, or ugliness.

The facts concerning the realization of home ideals are far below

the ideals themselves. Neither income nor the standard of living in rural America keeps pace with either of these items of urban America. Although much can be said for the maintenance of home ideals and character building forces in the average rural home as contrasted to the average urban home, it is nevertheless true that in health, protection, reasonable comfort, and the opportunity for understanding life at its best, the country home lags behind the city home and falls far short of its possibilities. If rural home and housing standards continue too low, the outcome is not long in doubt; either the more ambitious people move to other places in order to get the ampler life which they crave; or they live a constantly frustrated and dissatisfied life, clinging to their longings and ambitions but never realizing them; or they yield their ambitions and ideals, and sink to the lower level of living.<sup>19</sup>

**Methods and Agencies of Rural Home Improvement.**—Probably the greatest work done toward improving home life on American farms is that of the home demonstration agents. This work was made possible by the Smith-Lever Act (1914), providing for "the extension of knowledge in agriculture and domestic science in rural communities of the United States." By 1918-1919 nearly 2000 home demonstration agents were at work in as many counties, and in 1922 alone more than 250,000 and 300,000 improved practices among rural women and girls, respectively, were reported as due to this work. Miss Grace Frysinger, of the Washington office of this service, sets forth the home agents' work as follows:

The first item for consideration in home demonstration work is its permanent contribution to the rural home.

Second, the scope of the information which may be given is as intimate as the problem of individual home making, and as broad as the field of civic improvement.

Third, home demonstration work is so administered that even with but one home demonstration agent resident in the county, the maximum number of families in any county may receive the assistance desired in bettering home and community conditions.<sup>20</sup>

However, rural home improvement is not restricted to one agency, for the colleges of agriculture in the various states print and distribute regularly among farm families bulletins on "Beau-

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>20</sup> *Proceedings, Sixth National Country Life Conference*, pp. 143-144.

tifying Home Grounds," "Beautifying the Farm Home," "Landscaping the Home Grounds," "Convenient Kitchens," "Suggestions for Rural Home Planning," "Farm Plumbing," "Farm Water Supply," "Sewage Disposal for the Farm Home," "Running Water in the Farm Home," "Operating a Home Heating Plant," "Power for the Farm from Small Streams," "Farm Lighting Systems," and occasionally, "Child Care." The United States Department of Agriculture maintains a Division of Home Economics Research, as do also the various state agricultural experiment stations under the Purnell Act.

On September 30, 1931, there were 1410 county home demonstration agents employed in the United States, and also a number of state specialists on nutrition, clothing, management, and child care. On June 30, 1931, specialists in home management were employed by thirty-one states, and fourteen other states employed home improvement specialists.<sup>21</sup> In practically all the states the specialists who work on a state-wide basis assist the county home agents in their work on flower gardening, landscaping, home management, clothing, nutrition and cooking. In the home economics extension activities 646,340 farm women were enrolled in 34,959 clubs or groups. The information in Table 50 sets forth the num-

TABLE 50—NUMBER OF HOME DEMONSTRATION AGENTS  
REPORTING DIFFERENT TYPES OF HOME IMPROVEMENT  
PROJECTS, 1930<sup>22</sup>

House plans (including remodeling)	294
Water systems	272
Sewage systems	186
Lighting systems	192
Heating systems	106
Kitchen rearrangement	789
Home labor-saving equipment	758
All phases of house furnishing	1025
Room improvement (4-H Club work)	810
Improvement home grounds	737
Total	5169

ber of home agents reporting on various types of projects undertaken to improve rural home life. In addition to the home agents, the farm agents gave instructions on these same projects in 3456 cases.

<sup>21</sup> President's Conference on Home Building and Home Ownership, *Tentative Report of the Committee on Farm and Village Housing*, Appendix I, Section D.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid*.



During the year 1930-1931, 2414 county and home agents made 546,208 visits to 330,084 farm homes regarding projects related to the home, and, in addition, conducted hundreds of thousands of meetings in which illustrative lectures and demonstrations were given on all phases of home improvement. Bulletins were distributed by the thousands, and countless press articles appeared; exhibitions were held, and automobile tours, achievement days, better home contests and many other visual methods of instruction were employed. The accompanying figure<sup>25</sup> gives a picture

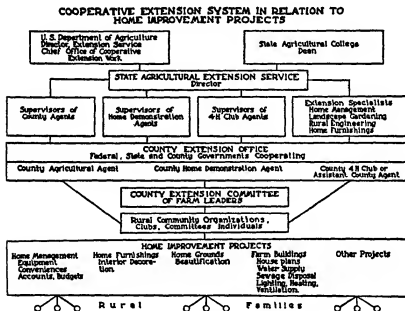


FIGURE 5

of the relation of national, state, county and community organizations to home improvement projects

The home demonstration agency may be criticized for devoting too much of its time to production, marketing, and the individual problems of farm women—cooking, millinery, and dressmaking—and too little time to the consideration of the farm family as a

<sup>25</sup> From the President's Conference on Home Building and Home Ownership, *Tentative Report of the Committee on Home Information and Service*, Washington, D. C., December, 1931, p. 60

social institution. However, in the following quotation, Miss Frysinger indicates that this comparative emphasis is to be changed in the future:

We must direct the attention of rural people toward determining positive standards of health for every member of the family and the factors contributing to such a standard of well-being.

We must help them to visualize home grounds, attractive and well-cared for, the inside of which are efficiently arranged, comfortable, and artistically satisfying, and in which there is every incentive and opportunity for mental, social, and spiritual development.

We must help parents to realize that the matter of greatest importance in their lives is to develop their boys and girls, giving to them sound bodies, efficient minds, spiritual consciousness, and an appreciation of the cultural side of life, as well as ability to make a living. We must try to interest parents in intelligently preparing to meet their responsibility through studying methods of child care, child training, and construction discipline.

There must be special stress on the need of greater spiritual consciousness and cultural development for all members of the rural family. We must urge that an environment of good household decoration, good music, good reading, and constructive family conversation is as definite a part of the responsibility of the parents as is the provision of food, clothing, and shelter.

We must help farm people to see efficient farming and efficient housekeeping as the necessary framework for a satisfying family life, and that rest, recreation, and cultural development are as necessary for rural, as for urban, family life.

We must help farm people to find enough leisure for true recreation and for family companionship and amusement, as well as for neighborhood family gatherings for songs, games, and other forms of social intercourse.<sup>24</sup>

These aims and purposes include practically every necessary ideal for the rural home. If this one powerful agency, with its thousands of trained women working throughout the nation in homes and communities and in boys' and girls' clubs, will follow them instead of devoting too much time to the solution of farm economic problems, its influence in rural life will be unequalled by any other force. Even though the city has many facilities in the way of institutional services which are not available to the country, it has no agency comparable to the home demonstration

<sup>24</sup> *Proceedings, Sixth National Country Life Conference*, pp. 144-145.

group, with its magnitude, power, and trained workers devoted exclusively to the improvement of the rural home.

Practically every weakness or defect in the rural home is the object—sometimes the only object—of one or more agencies devoted to its elimination. The improvement of general family life is covered by home demonstration work, by high school courses in home economics and evening courses for adults, by parent-teachers' association programs, by women's clubs, and by such organizations as Better Homes in America. Child life comes under such agencies as the Children's Bureau of the United States Department of Labor, the National Child Labor Committee, boys' and girls' club workers, the Y M C A, the Y W C A, the Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts, and the Camp Fire Girls. For the rural house and its surroundings there are the farm engineers and landscape architects of the state colleges of agriculture and, for home conveniences, home demonstration agents, in addition to the farm engineers. Boys and girls are trained in homemaking by the courses in agriculture and domestic science now being introduced in rural schools. In addition, such organizations as the Grange, the Farm Bureau, and many similar agencies include in their programs aids for the entire farm family. State governments are passing and enforcing laws for the improvement of rural health, sanitation, and education. Not only is the federal government supplying funds and agencies for assistance, but it is making the establishment of efficient rural homes in new areas under development the chief object of its Reclamation Service. The cumulative effect of all the activities just described will eventually be a vastly different rural home life from that which we know today.

**Idealism in Rural Life.**—We should not assume, from the picture of the weaknesses and defects in rural family life, that there is no idealism in rural life and that farm people are entirely unaware of the exceptional opportunities for a satisfying life offered by the family. Quite the contrary is true in some cases—and such cases are myriad over the country as a whole—judging by the following excerpts from letters from farm women. The wife of an Illinois wheat farmer writes: "I actually feel sorry for the woman who doesn't get a chance to help her husband once in a while." A young college woman in New York State contends that there are definite advantages in farm life: "I prefer living on a farm. My husband is such a help in the care, management,

and discipline of the children. He takes the children all over the farm with him and lets them ride in a basket, or box, or seat securely fastened on rake, cultivator, or plow." At the National Agricultural Conference called by President Harding in 1922, farm women made the following clear statement of the value of farm life: "We stand for the conservation of the American farm home, where husband and wife are partners, and where children have the opportunity to develop in wholesome fashion"<sup>25</sup>

A nation-wide letter-writing contest was conducted by *The Farmer's Wife*, a farm magazine, based on the questions, "Do farm mothers believe in farming? Have they enough faith in farming to want their daughters to marry farmers?" Ninety-four per cent of the more than 7000 letters received gave an affirmative answer, and one of these letters follows:

I'm going to stop a bit, dear farm woman, in the midst of my work, for wee daughter is having her nap and it's a good opportunity to tell you why I wish the best of all good things for our pride and hope and joy.

It is because I have known the happiness which comes of service, that I want my daughter to know it, too. Is there any greater joy, I wonder, than that of a hard task well done? When I have hurried with my work that I might do something extra outside, worked until I felt old and cross and tired, and the best man in all the world has said, "I certainly couldn't farm without you," oh, how I've thrilled. It becomes a little song in my heart and lightens my work for days. And even if he weren't the best man, I think I could be quite happy with the thought, "I've earned my way today; I'm helping with the most essential job on earth, I'm working for a better future."

Then there is the beauty of family life on the farm. Instead of seeing my son rushing off with the fellows, my daughter going out for a good time that I'll know nothing about, and the younger children coaxing to go to the movies, we'll be spending our evenings together with our music, books, and mutual friends, or going out to some amusement together.

And last but not least, of the good things I desire for this daughter o' mine, are peace, a love of nature, and time for quiet, happy thoughts. Can they be gotten by any other class of working people as easily as by the woman on the farm? She doesn't rush to finish her

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<sup>25</sup> Quotations from *The Advantages of Farm Life, a Study by Correspondence and Interview with Eight Thousand Farm Women*, digest of unpublished manuscript, Bureau of Agricultural Economics, United States Department of Agriculture, Washington, D. C.

work that she may spend a day bargain hunting—a day of hurry, worry, and “me-first” thoughts; of spending money she shouldn’t spend, and gazing at things she wants and can’t have. No; she may sit on the front porch a bit, while she sews, or mends, or reads. She will see and feel and hear the beauty of the world—her world—and with an unruffled spirit she will go in and get supper for her hungry brood.

And so, folks, I want my daughter to marry a farmer, a good man, upright, steadfast, and true, with visions of the farm-life-to-be in his heart. Then, hand in hand, they can work to make their dreams come true, and she will know the happiness I have known. I could not ask for more.<sup>28</sup>

### QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

- 1 What is meant by the statement, “Familism is more prevalent in rural than in urban districts”?
- 2 Are the advantages of the more closely knit farm family unit greater than the disadvantages which arise from the isolation inherent in farm family existence? Give reasons for your answer.
- 3 Is the great amount of work required of the farm woman an asset or a handicap to her as a mother? Explain your answer.
- 4 What do you think of the great amount of child labor on farms?
- 5 Why are divorce rates lower among country than among city people?
- 6 Why do country boys and girls marry younger than city boys and girls?
- 7 Name some of the household conveniences and facilities that could be supplied in country homes without great difficulty.
- 8 Do you believe that farm women, for the most part, want their daughters to become farm women? Discuss fully.

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<sup>28</sup> For further information on the contest, write *The Farmer’s Wife*, St. Paul, Minnesota.

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## CHAPTER XIII

### RURAL YOUTH

#### THE NUMBER OF RURAL YOUTH

**The Importance of Rural Youth.**—As was brought out in Chapter IV, children constitute a greater percentage of the rural population, and the farm population in particular, than of the total national population. Only 43.8 per cent of the total population is rural (1930); but 50.8 per cent of the children under five years of age, and 51.6 per cent of those under 10 years, are rural. The farm population constitutes only 24.6 per cent of the national, but it includes 29.2 per cent of all children under 5 years, and 30.5 per cent of all under 15 years. Table 51 analyzes in some detail the surplus of children in the rural population.

The facts in Table 51 are significant because they show the excess of children in the rural population, show that the excess is cumulative up to ten years of age in the rural population as a whole, and up to fifteen years of age in the farm population. It is thus seen that youths and their problems, at least so far as numbers are concerned, are more important in rural than in urban society. If cities of more than 2500 population had the same percentage of youths as they have of the total national population, they would have 1,205,387 more children under five years of age, 1,855,922 more under ten years of age, 2,661,970 more under fifteen years of age, 3,128,848 more under 20 years of age, and 2,817,693 more under 25 years of age than they now have. The number of rural children would be reduced by these same amounts. If the rural farm population had only the same percentage of youths as it has of the total national population it would have 526,106 fewer children under 5 years of age, 1,302,726 fewer under 10 years of age, 2,090,476 fewer under 15 years of age, 2,669,612 fewer under 20 years of age, and 3,429,750 fewer under 25 years of age than it now has.

The economic and social conditions of farm life are, therefore,

# RURAL YOUTH

291

TABLE 51—SURPLUS OF YOUNG PEOPLE IN THE RURAL FARM AND RURAL NON-FARM POPULATION, 1930<sup>1</sup>

	United States		Urban		Total Rural		Farm		Non-farm	
	Number		Number	Per Cent	Number	Per Cent	Number	Per Cent	Number	Per Cent
All ages	112,775,046		68,954,823	56 2	53,820,223	43 8	30,157,518	24 6	23,662,710	19 3
Under 5 years of age	11,444,390		5,226,360	49 2	5,818,030	50 8	3,341,426	29 2	2,476,604	21 6
Under 10 years of age	23,651,999		11,437,501	48 4	12,214,498	51 6	7,121,118	30 2	5,093,380	21 4
Under 15 years of age	35,656,876		17,387,194	48 8	18,269,682	51 2	10,862,065	30 5	7,407,617	20 7
Under 20 years of age	47,208,991		23,402,605	49 6	23,806,386	50 4	14,283,034	30 3	9,523,352	20 1
Under 25 years of age	58,079,370		29,822,913	51 3	28,256,457	48 7	16,717,275	28 8	11,539,182	19 9
Over 25 years of age	64,695,676		39,121,910	60 5	25,563,766	39 5	13,440,238	20 8	12,123,528	18 7

<sup>1</sup> Fifteenth Census, Population Bulletin, Second Series, Table 20



of national concern, if for no other reason than because the farm home and family have the chief responsibility for so large a proportion of the children of this country.

**The Rights of Youth.**—The White House Conference on Child Health and Protection declared that the two basic needs of children are "(a) the need for security, and (b) the need for development",<sup>2</sup> and whether rural life can satisfy these needs is probably more important than anything else. In 1930, of the 35,656,876 children in this country under 15 years of age, 18,269,682, or over half of them, lived in rural areas—7,407,617 in villages, and 10,862,065 on farms. It would appear from the facts presented in the chapter on the rural family (Chapter XII) and in the subsequent chapter on rural health (Chapter XVIII), that rural children have a fair degree of security and a fair chance of development. But when rural child life is checked against the minimum standards set forth in the "Children's Charter," which grew out of the White House Conference, it is at once apparent that the rights of rural children are none too well assured, nor is there any implication of the inferiority of the rural environment in the statement that in the main the conditions of rural child life do not guarantee these minimum standards. The nineteen planks of the Children's Charter, setting forth the minimum standards determined by 3500 experienced men and women, after months of study, are as follows

I—For every child spiritual and moral training to help him to stand firm under the pressure of life

II—For every child understanding and the guarding of his personality as his most precious right.

III—For every child a home and that love and security which a home provides; and for that child who must receive foster care, the nearest substitute for his own home.

IV—For every child full preparation for his birth, his mother receiving prenatal, natal and postnatal care; and the establishment of such protective measures as will make child-bearing safer

V—For every child health protection from birth through adolescence, including periodical health examinations, and, where needed, care of specialists and hospital treatment; regular dental examinations and care of teeth; protective measures against communicable diseases, the insuring of pure food, pure milk, and pure water

<sup>2</sup> *Preliminary Committee Reports of the White House Conference on Child Health and Protection*, The Century Company, New York, 1931, p. 545

VI—For every child from birth through adolescence, promotion of health, including health instruction and a health program, wholesome physical and mental recreation, with teachers and leaders adequately trained.

VII—For every child a dwelling place safe, sanitary, and wholesome, with reasonable provision for privacy, free from conditions which tend to thwart his development, and a home environment harmonious and inviting

VIII—For every child a school which is safe from hazards, sanitary, properly equipped, lighted, and ventilated For younger children nursery schools and kindergartens to supplement home care.

IX—For every child a community which recognizes and plans for his needs, protects him against physical dangers, moral hazards, and disease, provides him with safe and wholesome places for play and recreation; and makes provision for his cultural and social needs

X—For every child an education, which through the discovery and development of his individual abilities, prepares him for life, and through training and vocational guidance prepares him for a living which will yield him a maximum of satisfaction.

XI—For every child such teaching and training as will prepare him for successful parenthood, homemaking, and the rights of citizenship, and for parents, supplementary training to fit them to deal wisely with the problems of parenthood.

XII—For every child education for safety and protection against accidents to which modern conditions subject him—those to which he is directly exposed and those which, through loss or maiming of his parents, affect him directly

XIII—For every child who is blind, deaf, crippled, or otherwise physically handicapped, and for the child who is mentally handicapped, such measures as will early discover and diagnose his handicap, provide care and treatment, and so train him that he may become an asset to society rather than a liability. Expenses of these services should be borne publicly where they cannot be privately met.

XIV—For every child who is in conflict with society the right to be dealt with intelligently as society's charge, not society's outcast, with the home, the school, the church, the court and the institution when needed, shaped to return him whenever possible to the normal stream of life.

XV—For every child the right to grow up in a family with an adequate standard of living and the security of a stable income as the surest safeguard against social handicaps.

XVI—For every child protection against labor that stunts growth, either physical or mental, that limits education, that deprives children of the rights of comradeship, of play, and of joy

XVII—For every rural child as satisfactory schooling and health services as for the city child, and an extension to rural families of social, recreational, and cultural facilities.

XVIII—To supplement the home and the school in the training of youth, and to return to them those interests of which modern life tends to cheat children, every stimulation and encouragement should be given to the extension and development of the voluntary youth organizations

XIX—To make everywhere available this minimum protection of the health and welfare of children, there should be a district, county, or community organization for health, education, and welfare, with full-time officials, coordinating with a state-wide program which will be responsive to a nation-wide service of general information, statistics, and scientific research. This should include

(a) Trained, full-time public health officials, with public health nurses, sanitary inspection, and laboratory workers

(b) Available hospital beds.

(c) Full-time public welfare service for the relief, aid, and guidance of children in special need due to poverty, misfortune, or behavior difficulties, and for the protection of children from abuse, neglect, exploitation, or moral hazard.

For EVERY child these rights, regardless of race, or color, or situation, wherever he may live under the protection of the American flag<sup>\*</sup>

Child life on the farm varies all the way from wholesomeness, buoyancy and happiness to dreary stultification. The child may have the opportunity for contact with nature, flowers, birds, open fields and animals, or he may be deprived of all these things by having to work at too early an age, he may have the advantages offered by a contented, prosperous, happy family circle, or he may belong to a migratory horde which furnishes cheap labor in beet, cotton, tobacco and truck fields. Anyone who disregards either of these extremes is not dealing with all the facts in the case, and, moreover, he is doing little to assist in the solution of rural problems or a complete understanding of rural life.

Child life in the rural districts escapes many of the physical dangers inherent in the city's complex, teeming life, and it is free from the influence of the gambling resorts, gangs, slums, and the

<sup>\*</sup> Special publication of the White House Conference on Child Health and Protection, Washington, D C., April, 1931

other vicious, degenerating agencies of the city. It is doubtful whether city children ever reach the heights of buoyancy and enthusiasm over their particular type of life that rural children do. The farm child is a member of a real family circle, and his contacts with parents and brothers and sisters are constant and, for the most part, wholesome. He can have his own pets, his own playground, his own small chores, and the open fields; the range of the farm is his, and the tools and animals are his to observe and use. If he can be taught the meaning of all these things when he first experiences them, the opportunity for the development of his personality is unexcelled.

Unhappily, however, farm children do not always have the opportunities just described. In the early days of farming, every member of the family had to work and, even though the necessity may have passed, rural parents still cling to this idea. Furthermore, many rural families are poor, and they consider the earnings of their children as essential to the family's economic maintenance. The result is that there is a real child labor problem on the farm, with its corollaries, ill health, absence from school, lack of play and, sometimes, the almost complete restriction or absence of the factors making for a wholesome childhood.

#### THE DEVELOPMENT OF CHILD LIFE IN RURAL HOMES

**The Influence of the Reign of Rural Tradition on Child Life.**—The fact that rural people are slower than urban people to change their ways of doing and thinking offers both advantages and disadvantages to child life. Tradition is the only way children can learn the ways of society; on the other hand, we look to youth for new ways of action and thought which will change those traditions. There are undoubtedly fundamental human values in family life, for otherwise the family as one form of social organization would have ceased to exist; but extreme familism is a serious handicap in that it tends to monopolize the time, attention, and even the aspirations of children as well as adults. We have seen that familism is more marked among rural than urban people, and we have seen that rural people have been slower than city people to give up traditional ways and allow the science, commerce, leisure and art of today to enter their life. But there are some traditional characteristics of rural life—willingness to work, independence of judgment, love of nature, and aversion

to fads and fashions—which are by no means unwholesome as elements in child conditioning. The child is the center of the home and, in rural life as elsewhere, its chief concern, and any condition of the home or rural life that menaces the welfare of children is handicapping the performance of the greatest function of the rural home.

**The Problems of Rural Youth.**—A number of studies reveal the fact that rural youth is not entirely free from the personality conflicts arising from the struggle between custom or tradition, and individual desire. Whether the conflict between rural children and their parents is greater than that between urban children and parents is impossible to say; but that the traditional attitudes of farm parents do cause such conflicts can hardly be doubted.

A common complaint of farm youths is their lack of opportunity for organized club and play life. It will be seen in the chapter on Rural Recreation (page 503) that rural boys want group games even more than city boys do; but the opportunities for such games are far greater in both city and village life than in rural life. Kirkpatrick found that, of 1188 farm boys, only 48, or 4.0 per cent, said they had a chance to attend "socials, parties and picnics," and only 354, or 29.8 per cent, had any chance to participate in "sports, games, hikes, etc." Of the 1464 farm girls he studied, 180, or 12.3 per cent, answered positively on the first point, and 285, or 19.5 per cent, on the second.<sup>4</sup>

Morgan and Burt studied what they called the "activity wishes" of 1431 young people in four rural communities in Missouri, and found that "Fifty-six per cent (56%) of all expressed activity wishes are recreational. Only 8 per cent of the total number of organizations found are available to meet this recreational need, and barely 7 per cent of the young people are members of these organizations. The number who are not affiliated is consequently greater in this type of activity wish than in any other, amounting to 1335 of the 1431 young people."<sup>5</sup>

These "activity wishes" ranked as follows: "recreational," 56 per cent; "educational," 17 per cent; "social," 16 per cent, and

<sup>4</sup> Kirkpatrick, E. L., *Attitudes and Problems of Farm Youth* (mimeographed), United States Department of Agriculture, Washington, D. C., November, 1926.

<sup>5</sup> Morgan, E. L., and Burt, H. J., "Community Relations of Rural Young People," *Research Bulletin 110*, Missouri Agricultural Experiment Station, Columbia, 1927, p. 74.

"religious," 3 per cent. The data in Table 52 compare the "activity wishes" and the opportunities for fulfilling them.

TABLE 52—COMPARISONS BETWEEN "ACTIVITY WISHES" OF 1431 YOUNG PEOPLE AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR THEIR FULFILLMENT IN FOUR MISSOURI RURAL COUNTIES\*

Type of Activity Wish	Per Cent of Total Expressed Wishes	Total Number of Young Peoples' Organizations	Per Cent of All Young People Belonging	Number of Young People Who Are Not Members	Trend in Organization Membership
Religious	3 0	66	42 0	823	Increasing
Educational	17 0	5	36 0	915	Increasing
Social	16 0	18	34 0	945	Decreasing
Recreational	56 0	8	7 0	1335	Decreasing

In a report of a detailed study of the personal problems of girls in Pender County, North Carolina, Nora Miller paints a rather dreary picture of the lives of farm girls in the tobacco belt. After describing the father's domination and the hard work and re-

TABLE 53—UNSATISFIED MONEY NEEDS OF 59 OUT-OF-SCHOOL GIRLS AND 104 HIGH SCHOOL GIRLS, PENDER COUNTY, NORTH CAROLINA, 1930

Item	Out-of-school Girls	High School Girls
Clothes	41	48
Books	6	8
Furniture	6	6
Vocational training	7	
Cosmetics	6	
Embroidery material	6	
Car	5	
Radio or Victrola	4	1
Help the poor		4
Stamps and stationery	3	
Wrist watch		2
Gifts		4
Visit out of community	3	5
Permanent wave		1
Nothing specified	14	21

\* *Ibid.*, p. 73

stricted social contacts of the mother and children, she presents the data in Tables 53 to 56, inclusive.<sup>7</sup>

TABLE 54.—VOCATIONAL DESIRES OF 58 OUT-OF-SCHOOL GIRLS AND 104 HIGH SCHOOL GIRLS, PENDER COUNTY, NORTH CAROLINA, 1930

Item	Out-of-school Girls	High School Girls
Take business course	6	23
Work in city	8	14
Train for nursing	3	12
Go to college (work way)	7	10
Go to college (parents paying expenses)		9
Get married	11	9
Stay at home		8
Work in city or continue studies		11
Operate poultry farm	1	
No desire specified	20	8
Total	58	104

TABLE 55.—REASONS 58 OUT-OF-SCHOOL GIRLS STATED FOR DISLIKING COUNTRY LIFE, PENDER COUNTY, NORTH CAROLINA, 1930

Cause	Number
Little chance to earn money	1
Loneliness	7
Hard work	2
Little chance to earn money and loneliness	2
Little chance to earn money and few places to go	1
Loneliness and hard work	2
Loneliness and few places to go	5
Hard work and few places to go	10
Little chance to earn money, loneliness, and hard work	1
Loneliness, hard work, few places to go	3
Little chance to earn money, hard work and few places to go	3
Not specifying	5

The personal problems studied by Miss Miller also included difficulties with the family, and Tables 57, 58, and 59 give their causes.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>7</sup> Miller, Nora, "Personal Problems of the Girls of Pender County, North Carolina," Master's Thesis (unpublished), Graduate School, Cornell University, Ithaca, June, 1931.

<sup>8</sup> Miller, Nora, *op. cit*

TABLE 56 —UNSATISFIED RECREATIONAL DESIRES OF 58 OUT-OF-SCHOOL GIRLS AND 104 HIGH SCHOOL GIRLS, PENDER COUNTY, NORTH CAROLINA, 1930

Item	Number Out-of-school Girls	Number High School Girls
Visit	3	41
Read	1	11
Hike		3
Swim	19	
Study music	3	
Shows	23	
Play cards	7	
Dance	5	
Nothing specified	16	55

TABLE 57 —CAUSES OF FAMILY CLASHES IN 41 HOMES OF 58 OUT-OF-SCHOOL GIRLS, PENDER COUNTY, NORTH CAROLINA, 1930

Item	Number of Homes
Parents refusing privileges girls request	29
Use of money	28
Distribution of work	19
Misplaced personal articles	15
Use of family car	13
Disagreement between parents and girls regarding boy friends	13
Late meals	9
Intoxicating liquor	7

TABLE 58 —WHAT 62 HIGH SCHOOL GIRLS DISLIKE THAT FATHERS AND MOTHERS DO, PENDER COUNTY, NORTH CAROLINA, 1930

Item	Father	Mother
Quarrels	6	12
Uses tobacco	7	
Refuses privileges of going places		6
Uses profane language	6	
Farms	5	
Worries		4
Goes hunting	2	
Works too hard		2
Favors other members of the family		2
Will not attend Sunday school		1



## RURAL YOUTH

TABLE 59.—THINGS THAT 104 HIGH SCHOOL GIRLS  
DO THAT DISPLEASE PARENTS, PENDER COUNTY,  
NORTH CAROLINA, 1930

Item	Number
Go too much	15
Loose temper	11
Have dates	5
Play basketball	3
Keep late hours	2
Waste time	2
Do not do best school work	2
Use cosmetics	4
Use slang	1
Play bridge	1
Dance.	1
Have too much company	1

The following quotation on this problem is taken from Miss Miller's report

Causes of family clashes were stated by girls from forty-one homes. Children wanting privileges the parents were unwilling to grant disturbed the harmony in twenty-nine homes. When the girls ask permission to go to places, the parents refuse with no explanation. Some girls accept the decision in an unpleasant way, others insist and secure permission, and a few slip off either before or after asking permission and take the rebuff if the parents find out they went. The fathers are more unreasonable about privileges than the mothers. In some cases the mothers help the girls slip off from the fathers in order to have some social life. This often leads to conflicts between the father and mother if the father discovers that he is being plotted against. The writer knows instances where the mother lives in constant fear that she will get a scolding and have a pouting husband for a week if he finds out the daughter went to places that are considered quite all right for the girls of the community.

The use of money was listed as an upsetting feature by girls in twenty-eight homes. It has been stated before that no budgets or family allowances are made and all members ask the father for money as it is needed. The girls often have difficulty in convincing the father that they really need money they ask for. Twenty-four of the fifty-eight either said or implied that they did not get their share of the family's money.

Distribution of work was listed as a cause of clashes in nineteen

homes. The girls often feel that they have more than their share of the work to do. They seldom get through with one job till the mother assigns another. The mother may be uncomplimentary about the work and the girl unwilling to start the next task.

The misplacement of personal articles was listed as a cause of family clashes in fifteen homes. Although the members of the family may have definite sleeping rooms, few have a feeling of ownership in any storage space. Dresser drawers and closets are often filled with unused articles which must be moved every time anything is needed. The girl may have to look over the entire house to find a piece of toilet soap or a towel. The brother may start a search for his shaving equipment and find it crammed away in the corner of his sister's bedroom. This lack of order causes a great waste of time and is hard on the dispositions of all members of the family. The writer recalls an instance in which a boy irritated the whole family and some guests over a search for his pocket book which he had carelessly stuck away and forgotten where he put it.

Use of the family car, late meals, and father or brothers drinking intoxicating liquor were also listed as causes of family clashes. Thirteen families had disagreements about the amount of use the car had or who was to have it on various occasions. Nine girls said that unpleasant scenes occurred when the father or brothers were in a hurry to go somewhere and meals were not ready on time. The father or brother drinking caused disagreements in seven houses. One girl left and went to the city to work rather than take a punishment her father threatened while intoxicated.

Twenty-two girls from thirteen homes said they had controversies with one or both parents about their boy friends. Many parents are unwilling to accept the fact that the daughter is supposed to get married and establish a home of her own. The fathers seem to distrust the boys and think none of them are good enough for their daughters. The mothers who have found married life a hard lot hate to see their daughters enter a similar career.<sup>9</sup>

The darker aspects of farm life are also seen in the following extract from a farm girl's letter:

There exist, on many farms, conditions which make life there almost unbearable, to young people particularly. One of them is the lack of congenial companionship; which may be due to lack of material, or to the thoughtlessness of parents, which make it impossible for the young people to have their friends come to their homes. Then, in many farm homes, there is a woeful lack of books, magazines, and

<sup>9</sup> Miller, Nora, *op cit*

papers of the best sort; again due to the lack of education or of interest on the part of the parents. So, also, with pictures, music, and recreation. But perhaps greater than any other, excepting perhaps the first named, is the dull, weary succession of duties following each other, day in and day out, without rest or respite, and without any or with few of the modern conveniences to lighten the work.<sup>10</sup>

This section should not be concluded without again calling attention to the rôle the farm home can play in the normal development of child life. Ruby Green Smith, of the Extension Service of the New York State College of Agriculture, gives the following recipe whereby farm children may be offered the real and potential opportunities of rural life:

A recipe for preserving the most important crop on the farm, the children—Take one large grassy field. Add several children and a few puppies. Mix the children and the puppies together, stirring constantly. Sprinkle the field with daisies. Add a babbling brook and some pebbles. Pour the brook over the pebbles. Spread over all a deep, blue sky; and bake in the hot sun. When thoroughly wet and brown, remove and set in the bathtub to cool.<sup>11</sup>

**Child Labor on the Farm.**—The number of children engaged in agricultural pursuits has increased steadily for several decades. It nearly doubled between 1880 and 1900, and between 1900 and 1910 the increase was approximately one-half. The apparent decrease during 1910-1920 is probably due to the fact that the 1920 census was taken in January, a slack season in farm work. In 1920, 60 per cent of the 1,000,000 child laborers in this country were employed in agriculture, and this included over 650,000 children under 10 years of age, of whom 63,900 "worked out" and were therefore not under their parents' guidance and direction.

The White House Conference on Child Health compiled the census statistics on the occupation of boys which are given in Table 60 (presumably for 1930).

All the aspects of the employment of children for farm work are not bad; but, as Ruth McIntire says, anyone will question whether, during the school term, it is "good" to treat children five years old as "regular workers" in the cotton field, or to have a ten-year-old girl in the beet fields handle a total weight of sev-

<sup>10</sup> Crow, M. F., *op cit.*, p. 79

<sup>11</sup> *Proceedings, Sixth National Country Life Conference*, p. 3

TABLE 60—CENSUS STATISTICS ON OCCUPATION OF BOYS<sup>13</sup>

Occupation	10-13 Years, Per Cent	14-15 Years, Per Cent
Agriculture	85 0	52 2
Mining	0 2	1 4
Manufacturing	2 6	21 4
Transportation	0 7	3 1
Trade	6 3	7 2
Public service	0 1	0 2
Professional service	0 1	0 4
Dramatic and personal service	1 9	2 5
Clerical	2 4	11 9

eral tons every day.<sup>13</sup> Local newspapers in Texas tell of cotton-picking contests among five-year-old boys. One youngster picked 2002 pounds between August 29th and November 2nd, his best day's work being 81 pounds; the parents of another boy boasted that he had averaged 50 pounds a day during the season.

The dangers of agricultural child labor are seen chiefly in the retardation in school, bad health and poor physical development, and the disintegration of normal home life. An example of its effect on education is seen in the fact that, in 1924, over 1000 children in the Philadelphia school district were away from school during all of September and October because they were working in the adjacent cranberry bogs in New Jersey.<sup>14</sup> Cotton picking, tobacco "suckering" and "worming," weeding, hoeing and pulling in the beet fields and on the truck farms—all these processes throw the body out of its normal posture; in many of them the child is not in an upright position during his whole working day, for he crawls on his hands and knees for hours at a time while weeding, in hoeing the shoulders are bent in and forward, and the head is lowered continually. The farm work day is always long, and the pace is usually set by the older people. Furthermore, migratory laborers often live in badly crowded shacks, or even tents, and under the worst sanitary conditions.

In a study of child labor on Maryland truck farms made by

<sup>13</sup> White House Conference, *op cit*, p. 392.

<sup>14</sup> McIntire, Ruth, *Children in Agriculture*, pamphlet issued by the National Child Labor Committee, New York, 1930, p. 3.

<sup>15</sup> *Child Labor Facts*, published by the National Child Labor Committee, New York, 1924, p. 11.

the Federal Children's Bureau, it was found that in one community where 218 white and 322 Negro children under 16 years of age were working, 87 per cent of the colored children were under 10 years of age, and over 7.0 per cent of the children under both ages were working over eight hours a day, some of them for as many as fourteen hours.<sup>15</sup> Almost all of these children were retarded in school because of their absence for work in the fields. The white children under 10 years of age were 10.5 per cent behind, and those 15 years of age, 37.3 per cent behind. Twenty days is equivalent to one month's schooling, and over 22 per cent of these children had missed 20 days or more during that year (1921), and 3.8 per cent had missed 80 days or over, or 4 months of school work. In this community there were 268 families, including approximately 550 children under 16 years, who were migrants, moving from one "camp" to another, and living in "shanties."

Similar conditions were found in another community studied in the same survey. Of the 840 child laborers under 16 years of age covered by this study, 78 per cent were under 14, and 15 per cent under 8, years of age. Over 63 per cent of these children had been kept out of school to help with farm work, and practically all of them were behind in their studies. Over 13 per cent of the white children and over 33 per cent of the colored children were more than three years behind, and this was true also of the 33.6 per cent of the white children and the 55.3 per cent of the Negro children over 14 years of age.

That these conditions are not unusual in those sections where gang labor is employed in cultivating and harvesting farm crops is shown by studies made by the National Child Labor Committee in Michigan, Colorado, Connecticut, Oklahoma, Kentucky, and West Virginia, as well as by numerous rural surveys conducted by the various state agricultural colleges. All of these, and the United States census reports as well, show that poor school attendance, illiteracy, short school terms, and the loose enforcement of compulsory school attendance laws are most prevalent in sections where agricultural child labor is more prevalent.

The Committee on Farm and Village Housing of the President's Conference on Home Building and Home Ownership

<sup>15</sup> Channing, Alice, "Child Labor on Maryland Truck Farms," *Bureau Publication 123*, United States Department of Labor, Children's Bureau, 1923.

gathered information regarding special groups in agriculture, which corroborated the findings of other studies. In reference to "Migratory Agricultural Workers in New Jersey," it said:

These families include children of all ages, and their migration brings with it certain housing and educational problems. The 580 families were made up of 3719 persons. Fathers were present in 326 of the family groups, and mothers in 539. Sons and daughters numbered 2741. Some of them had reached their majority, but 2226 were children under sixteen years of age, 428 of whom were under six years of age. With the exception of the very young children, all members of the family worked in the fields. . . . As soon as a child could be profitably employed he was put to work. Children seven and eight years of age were often numbered among wage earners. It was customary for the child nine years of age and over to be regularly employed. Of the 1358 boys and girls from the ages of nine to fifteen, inclusive, 1210, or 89 per cent, were employed. Some of those in this age group who were unemployed were at home taking care of younger brothers and sisters.

The average migratory family came to New Jersey before the schools closed in the summer and stayed until after the schools had opened in the fall. Rarely did the children enter the local schools. Most of the parents frankly admitted that they kept them out of school to help earn money. Of the 1798 children of school age, six to fifteen years, inclusive, who lived on farms during the harvesting season in 1930, 1519, or 84 per cent, lost some time from school, the average number of days lost being 39.

As would be expected, children who were almost regularly kept out of school approximately one-fourth of the school year showed a high percentage of retardation. Almost two-thirds of the migrant children were over age for their school grade<sup>16</sup>

This Committee made the following statement in discussing "Migratory Agricultural and Cannery Workers in Pennsylvania":

It is not easy to measure the social cost of migratory labor. The disturbance and maladjustment in family life resulting from crowded, unsettled living conditions in labor camps may have a deeper and more lasting effect than would appear on the surface. Nor is it easy to gauge the effect on the children of living for weeks and months in

<sup>16</sup> President's Conference on Home Building and Home Ownership, Committee on Farm and Village Housing, "Housing of Special Groups," Appendix VII A (mimeographed), Washington, D. C., December, 1931, pp. 2, 3.

dreary crowded labor camps where they have little or no opportunity for recreation and where for the most part their activities are entirely unsupervised. One of the most serious effects of this migratory life on the children is the resulting irregular attendance in school. In 1927 an analysis was made of the school records of Philadelphia children who had migrated the previous summer to New Jersey, where they and their families were employed on truck farms and cranberry bogs. Nearly three-fourths of these children were over age for their school grade and, in the case of the older children who had been migrants for a longer period, approximately 90 per cent were retarded. These children are handicapped at the start; they lack the opportunity to acquire the education and training necessary for a satisfactory adjustment both industrially and socially. They are forced out into the world without any adequate preparation for the duties of citizenship which they must assume.<sup>17</sup>

Some people feel, perhaps, that a discussion of children in temporary camps has no close connection with child life on the farm. However, the baneful influence of these migrant agricultural laborers on both home and community life has already been discussed in several places, and the fact that there is a close relation between this shifting agricultural labor group and child life was established in a series of surveys conducted from 1920 to 1924 by the Children's Bureau. These surveys covered approximately 13,500 children working on farms in fourteen states—Michigan, Colorado, Texas, New Jersey, Maryland, Virginia, Illinois, Washington, Oregon, North Dakota, Kentucky, South Carolina, Massachusetts, and Connecticut—and showed that these migrant workers were found in great numbers in every state studied, with the exception of Illinois, North Dakota, and the tobacco-growing section.

The statistics thus far presented do not give complete information on child agricultural labor, for thousands of children who are working are too young to be listed as "gainfully employed" by the census. There are thousands of other children who feel the effects of farm work, even though they themselves do no work—those carried to the cotton and beet fields by their mothers and left in uncomfortable positions and unhygienic conditions for hours at a time while their mothers are at work. However, the

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, Appendix VII B, p. 5. See also *Monthly Labor Review*, vol. xxxii, no. 6, June, 1931, pp. 1330-1332.

definite handicaps to child development which have just been described are offset somewhat by the definite assets inherent in farm life, for farm children are taught to work, they learn application and tenacity, and they benefit in many other ways from being working members of the farm family cooperative labor group.

#### THE SECURITY OF THE RURAL CHILD

**Physical Security.**—The rural child lives a sheltered life from the point of view of safety from hunger, physical injury, and playing and wandering in dangerous places. There is of course some danger from animals and farm machinery, but rural parents usually know the whereabouts of their children and, furthermore, they are not bound by a work routine which prevents them leaving their tasks if a child's physical safety is at stake. Rural housing may lag behind urban standards, but rural children always have some place to live which for the time can be called their home. The farm family's food may not be scientifically planned or entirely wholesome, but a rural child is rarely actually hungry.

However, from the standpoint of physical health and disease, he does not enjoy the same security, as the chapter on Rural Health (Chapter XVIII) will show. According to the White House Conference, "Recent surveys have shown that the rural school children have from one-half to 20 per cent more physical defects than the city school children. The rural child gets a one-sided physical development. He lacks the medical care and health service facilities that the city child is offered."<sup>18</sup>

A special committee of this Conference made a detailed study of milk in relation to disease, from which the following conclusions are quoted:

"Of the 121 epidemics [carried by milk] occurring from 1920-24 inclusive, as reported by State Health Officers, the major percentage distribution of the epidemics occurred in cities of from 10,000 to 25,000 population and in the smaller communities, including the rural sections and towns under 2500 population."<sup>19</sup>

"Epidemics occurring in cities during the period 1925-29 have somewhat the same distribution [as for 1920-24], although the

<sup>18</sup> White House Conference, *op cit*, p. 207

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid*, Appendix, Section II C, p. viii



larger percentage of milk-borne diseases occurred in the rural districts and the towns under 2500<sup>20</sup>

When such statements as these are taken into consideration, together with the lack of medical care—especially prenatal and natal care—it becomes apparent that rural children are not actually as secure physically as many people believe them to be; and this becomes even more evident if the almost total absence of organized recreation is also considered.

**Economic Security.**—The term, economic security, is relative, and consequently offers several interpretations. If economic security is understood to mean an income that guarantees a family a standard of living adequate in every respect, millions of rural children are deprived of this security, as is apparent from the following statement made by the White House Conference: "About 60 per cent to 70 per cent of farmers make only a modest living, while 30 per cent to 40 per cent have too low an income for an adequate standard of living."<sup>21</sup>

If, on the other hand, economic security means the assurance of employment and comparative ease in attaining a minimum standard of living, then the farm-reared child enjoys greater security than any other child, except of course the children who inherit large fortunes which guarantee them a life of ease and financial safety. But even here, the "virtue in thrift and the value of an earned dollar," which farm boys and girls learn almost of necessity, may at times offer even greater security than a fortune inherited by someone who has no knowledge of these values.

**Mental and Social Security.**—Both mental and social security are matters of psychology, for they are the results of mental attitudes. If an individual feels that his social status is desirable and secure, and if he is devoid of haunting fears and unfulfilled desires, he enjoys not only mental, but social, security. From the standpoint of the relative absence of mental disease and mental conflict, the farm child enjoys greater mental security than do many urban boys and girls. Mental and social insecurity originates from forces and influences outside the family; and while no rural child is completely isolated from the contacts which afford an opportunity for a comparison of his own mode and level of living, he is more isolated than the average urban child. Conse-

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid*, p. ix.

<sup>21</sup> White House Conference, *op. cit.*, p. 397

quently he looks down less seldom on his own family and his own surroundings, the two greatest fortifications of both mental and social security. As the White House Conference said, "As a foundation for a satisfying life, every child needs to be wanted, loved, and understood. He needs to feel that he is accepted and belongs because of his own individual place and values in relation to the rest of the group."<sup>22</sup> The rural family is so conditioned by the work which is required, by the opportunities for a natural division of labor within the family, and the work value of its children, that a feeling of security develops quite automatically in the mind of the average rural child, furthermore, it is the reflex action of this feeling of security which leads to the individualism and independence of viewpoint characteristic of rural adults.

But this mental and social security may sometimes be a handicap to rural youth, for, although everyone strives for it, a security which restricts an individual to submissiveness and complacency tends to thwart the broad development of his personality. It is probable that the security of farm life, particularly the shelter of the farm home and the assurance of some kind of employment, leads to some degree of stultification of the personality, and, further, that many contributions to society as a whole, as well as to farm life, remain unmade merely because farm life is secure to the point of inhibiting stimulation by wholesome discontent.

#### AGENCIES FOR IMPROVING OPPORTUNITIES FOR RURAL YOUTH

We shall make no attempt to list all the agencies which do, or might, contribute to the improvement of opportunities for rural youth, many of which have been, or will be, discussed in other parts of this book. However, it may be said that, in general, anything that improves the rural standard of living and rural institutions such as the school and the church, anything that makes for a better community life and enhances the life of the rural population as a whole, will tend to improve the opportunities for the development and the outlook of farm boys and girls.

**Organizations for Young People.**—The majority of the agencies for child welfare, protection, and development have spent the greater part of their time, money, and ability in serving

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 545

urban children. Two facts are responsible for this: (1) rural children spend so large a part of their time at home, and (2) the needs of city children can be more easily determined by these agencies.

The White House Conference found that there were 1,151,891 girls enrolled in five leisure-time and character-influencing organizations, that these five had 2315 paid, and 105,271 volunteer, leaders, and that their annual expenditure was \$5,389,299.<sup>23</sup> The five agencies are the Big Sisters Federation, Inc., the Camp Fire Girls, Inc., the Girl Scouts, Inc., the Young Women's Christian Association (Girl Reserves or Young Girls' Department), and the 4-H Clubs (Extension Service of the United States Department of Agriculture and the various state agricultural colleges cooperating). The 4-H Club is by far the most widespread and powerful among farm girls, M. C. Wilson reporting 489,517 girls enrolled in this type of club during 1930.<sup>24</sup>

According to the White House Conference, 2,100,000 boys between 11 and 18 years of age were enrolled in 11 organizations. the Big Brothers Federation, Inc., the Boys' Club Federation, the Boy Scouts of America, the Boy Rangers of America, the Boy Builders, the Columbian Squires (K. C.), the Order of De Molay, 4-H Clubs, the Knights of Youth, the Young Men's Christian Association, and the Young Men's Hebrew Association.<sup>25</sup> These agencies had 7261 paid leaders, in addition to 341,811 volunteers; and six of them reported an operating outlay of \$19,500,000 for 1931. Here also the 4-H Club is more universal and more powerful than any of the others, the Conference reporting 305,509 boys enrolled; Wilson, however, reports 333,197 members for 1930.<sup>26</sup>

It is safe to say that, although over half of the children in this country live in rural districts, they constitute considerably less than half of the membership of these organizations. For example, of the 619,648 members enrolled in the Boy Scouts, only about 221,000 are rural boys, and the majority of them are probably village boys.

<sup>23</sup> White House Conference, *op. cit.*, p. 357.

<sup>24</sup> Wilson, M. C., "Statistical Results of Cooperative Extension Work, 1930," *Extension Service Circular 157*, United States Department of Agriculture, Washington, D. C., May, 1931, pp. 5, 26.

<sup>25</sup> White House Conference, *op. cit.*, p. 360.

<sup>26</sup> Wilson, M. C., *op. cit.*, pp. 5, 26.

Other organizations for young people which reach rural boys and girls to some extent are the Future Farmers of America, with a membership of about 55,000 rural boys over 14 years of age, the Juvenile Grange, with a membership of about 15,000 rural boys and girls between 5 and 14 years of age; the National Recreation Association, county Farm Bureaus, and the National Committee on Boys' and Girls' Club Work. In addition, the rural schools and churches, the United States Children's Bureau, and the Public Health and the Public Welfare Services are also active

Such agencies as day nurseries and kindergartens are almost entirely urban for, although some are located in small towns, there are few in the open country. The White House Conference found that in the large centers kindergartens are generally a part of the regular school system; and it goes on to say: "Institutions covered by this report (day nurseries, relief nursery schools, nursery schools with kindergartens, and kindergartens) exist in rural communities only about one-tenth as frequently as should be expected, in communities between 2500 and 10,000 about as frequently as should be expected; in communities between 10,000 and 100,000 about one and a half times as frequently, in communities from 100,000 to 500,000 almost three times as frequently, in communities between 500,000 and 1,000,000 one and a half times as frequently, and in communities above 1,000,000 slightly over twice as frequently as is to be expected on the basis of the population."<sup>27</sup> Of the children served by these agencies, there are 48.6 per cent in communities of 2500 and less, but there are only 5.6 per cent of such institutions in these communities.<sup>28</sup>

Of the projects in agricultural extension work in which a total of 1,535,619 rural boys and girls were enrolled, only 8507—less than six tenths of one per cent—were listed as enrolled in projects in "Child Training and Care."<sup>29</sup> This is probably indicative of two important facts: (1) that child life has been relatively so much more secure in rural family life that children's maladjustments, which are so frequent in cities, have not appeared, and (2) that the organizations for young people working in rural

<sup>27</sup> White House Conference, *op cit*, pp 156-157.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, p 156

<sup>29</sup> Wilson, M. C., *op cit*, p 28

districts do not as yet appreciate either the importance of rural youth in our national life, or their own maximum possibilities.<sup>80</sup>

### QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

- 1 Would you rather grow up in the country or in a city? Why?
- 2 Do you believe the "Children's Charter" is too Utopian to be applicable for rural children?
- 3 What do you think of taxing urban people for the purpose of helping with the education of rural boys and girls?
- 4 Which of the desires of rural children are least often satisfied?
- 5 Do you think that the relations between parents and children are more harmonious in rural or in urban families?
- 6 Do you believe that security leads to conservatism, and insecurity to radicalism?
- 7 Discuss the comparatively great amount of child labor on the farm.
- 8 Are the benefits in rural child labor equal to its ill effects?
- 9 Which organizations for young people do you think could render the greatest service to rural boys and girls?
- 10 If you were born and reared in the open country, describe your greatest joys and disappointments as a child.
- 11 If you were born and reared in a town or city, how did you regard country boys and girls when you were a child?

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<sup>80</sup> See *Rural Vermont*, Vermont Commission on Country Life, Burlington, 1931, chaps. xii, xv.

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## CHAPTER XIV

### THE FARM RESIDENCE

#### THE FARM HOUSE

**The Farm House and the Rural Standard of Living.**—It is of course true that "the house does not make the home," but it is equally true that home life cannot be all it should be if the house is a continuous handicap to the life, the work, and the self-respect of its inhabitants. The farm house is the environment of almost half the farm population—the women and children—all the time, and of all the farm population part of the time, therefore its size, arrangement, age and appearance are important. The house in which a family lives is probably a good index to the family's standard of living as a whole, for few people live in poor homes if they can afford better ones; on the other hand, since the farm woman is her own housekeeper, many feel that she should not have to take care of an elaborate house.

The farm house is probably the weakest spot in the rural standard of living when the standard is measured in terms of physical values. In a survey of 306 farm families in a well-to-do rural community in Missouri, the writer found that the average age of the farm house was over twenty years. This to some extent accounts for the absence of modern conveniences, almost all of which have become available for rural communities since most of these houses were built; for it is both difficult and expensive to install them in houses not planned to accommodate them. On the basis of a study of 1014 typical farm families in North Carolina, it was calculated that 6000 farm families in that one state live in one-room houses, and 42,000 rural families, in two-room houses.<sup>1</sup> In the sections of this country which are—or were formerly—timbered, thousands of farm families are living in log houses, and in the western prairie states many are still living in sod houses. If it were possible to bring together all the old, small and poor

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<sup>1</sup> Taylor, Carl C., and Zimmerman, C. C., *op. cit.*, pp. 39-50.

rural houses in this country, they would probably constitute slums at least equal to those of all our great cities combined

However, this statement must not be taken as implying that bad farm housing is characteristic of this country, because there are sections in which farm housing is above par. A number of the standard of living studies referred to in Chapters VIII and IX show rural houses to be quite adequate as far as the number of rooms is concerned. In his study of 1140 farm homes in Nebraska, Rankin found that there were 6.4 rooms in the average house,<sup>2</sup> and the Misses Bailey and Snyder found an average of 8 rooms in one county in Michigan.<sup>3</sup> But rural life is by no means free from slum conditions, a conclusion which will be further borne out by material to be presented later.

The close relation between the type and character of the farm house and the factors influencing the family's general standard of living has been apparent in practically all of the rural standard of living studies. Thaden says, "Apparently, if the per cent of total expenditures going for advancement is indicative of the standard of living, the standard for farm families bears a positive relationship to the value of the house in which they live."<sup>4</sup> According to Miss Frayser, "There was apparent a general tendency for the leisure-time interests of the housewife to increase in number and variety with the possession of modern household equipment."<sup>5</sup> In a study of 900 farm families, Kirkpatrick and Cowles found that "Many of the measurable factors of housing were found to be quite closely related to total value of the family living. The number of rooms used per household in the summer was from 3.8 for families with the lowest value of family living, to 7.4 at the highest level. The number of heated rooms per household and number of used bedrooms per person rose regularly with the level of living. The average house value showed a direct relationship

<sup>2</sup> Rankin, J. O., "Nebraska Farm Homes," *Bulletin* 191, Agricultural Experiment Station, University of Nebraska, Lincoln, May, 1923.

<sup>3</sup> Bailey, I. M., and Snyder, Mellessia F., "A Survey of Farm Homes," *Journal of Home Economics*, August, 1921, p. 348.

<sup>4</sup> Thaden, J. F., "Standard of Living on Iowa Farms," *Bulletin* 238 (revised), Agricultural Experiment Station, Iowa State College of Agriculture and Mechanic Arts, Ames, 1928, p. 105.

<sup>5</sup> Frayser, Mary E., "Use of Leisure in Selected Rural Areas of South Carolina," *Bulletin* 263, South Carolina Agricultural Experiment Station, Clemson College, 1930, p. 76.



to the total value of farm living. Possession of modern conveniences—central heat, electricity, and electrical equipment of various kinds, running water, modern plumbing and sewage disposal systems—was found to increase with regularity with the total value of family living.”<sup>6</sup>

**The Rural Housing Problem.**—There is a vast difference between the housing problem of the country and that of the city. Land in the city is at a premium, and millions of families live in houses owned by someone else. This high cost of land, together with the desire—almost the necessity—to live near one’s work, results in overcrowding and tenements, and this condition is the primary cause of the urban housing problem. In the country, land for ample ground space is almost always available, a large percentage of the families own their own houses, and each dwelling constitutes an individual unit. Therefore each farm home can and should have distinctive features, it should harmonize with its natural surroundings and should fit into the topography and landscape—in short, it should be the high point of the entire group of farm buildings. However, this is not always the case for, as one Missouri farm woman remarked to the writer, “A new barn will build a new house, but a new house will not help in any way to build a new barn.” However, the farm house is also the farm woman’s work shop, the children’s playhouse, and the farm man’s business office, and it should be planned and constructed to fulfill satisfactorily each of these functions.

An adequate farm house should provide a spacious kitchen, supplemented by an ample pantry or cellar where large supplies of food can be stored for the winter; a dining room, a living room, parlor or association room; enough bedrooms for the convenience and privacy of the various members of the family, and an office for the farm man. The kitchen is not merely the place where meals are cooked; it is also used for butter making, canning, working up the family’s meat supply and, often, for washing and ironing. Because of these varied functions, the model farm kitchen must of necessity be larger than the model city kitchen. The ideal farm house, of course, provides a separate room for this general work,

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<sup>6</sup> President’s Conference on Home Building and Home Ownership, Committee on Farm and Village Housing, *Special Reports*, Appendix VIII, Special Paper A, Washington, D. C., December, 1931, p. 8.

and also a sewing room for the still prevalent family tailoring and dressmaking.

Regulation housing standards require one and one-half rooms per individual, but almost every rural survey in any part of this country shows that these standards are not followed. In thousands of farm homes, the kitchen serves as the dining room, the dining room as living room and parlor, and the living room often is also a bedroom. For convenience sake, it may sometimes be desirable to put the family dining table in the kitchen or combine the dining room and living room, or the living room and parlor. However, the provision of office space for the farm man and of play space for the children, and the fact that more entertaining is done in the country, than in the city, home, should offset these suggested combinations sufficiently to make the regulation housing standards apply to the rural home.

**A Survey of Rural Housing in the United States.**—A rather complete survey of rural housing in this country was made during 1931 by the Committee on Farm and Village Housing of the President's Conference on Home Building and Home Owner-

TABLE 61.—PERCENTAGE OF FARM HOUSES OF DIFFERENT AGES, BY PRINCIPAL HOUSING SECTIONS OF THE UNITED STATES<sup>7</sup>

Section	Number of Houses For Which Information Was Obtained	Per Cent of Houses in Different Age Groups				
		Less than 20 Years	20 to 39 Years	40 to 59 Years	60 to 79 Years	80 or More Years
New England-New York	194	3 7	10 8	15 5	25 8	42 2
Central East	250	26 8	14 8	16 8	13 6	28 0
Appalachian-Ozark Highlands	174	30 9	37 4	16 7	8 6	6 4
Tobacco-Bluegrass	126	46 0	23 8	11 1	7 1	12 0
Cotton Belt	354	54 3	30 7	11 2	2 8	1 0
Corn Belt	80	28 7	27 5	32 5	8 8	2 5
Northern Dairy	156	31 4	33 9	26 3	5 8	2 6
Great Plains	91	60 4	37 4	1 1	1 1	
Great Basin	55	43 6	47 3	5 4	3 7	
Pacific Northwest	33	39 3	42 3	15 2	3 0	

<sup>7</sup> President's Conference on Home Building and Home Ownership, *op cit.*, Appendix II, p 5

ship. Data were gathered on rural houses in twenty selected agricultural sections, 1930 census statistics were made available in advance of their regular publication, and all earlier studies which could yield any data were reviewed. In addition to these statistical data, some fifty experts in rural sociology, home economics, agricultural economics, rural health, rural education, agricultural engineering, landscape gardening and architecture focused the knowledge of their several fields on the problem of rural housing. Some of the more outstanding data in their many reports are presented in this section.

The statistics in Table 61 corroborate our earlier statement that their age prevents many farm residences from having modern equipment. A study of this table shows that in the sections which have been fully settled for as long as forty years, except the Tobacco-Bluegrass and the Cotton Belt, the majority of the houses are over forty years old—83.5 per cent in New England-New York, 58.4 in the Central East, and 43.8 in the Corn Belt. Many of the houses in the Cotton Belt are farm tenant homes, and so poorly built that they can hardly last forty years.

Table 62 gives data on the average value of the farm house per farm. It is seen from this table that the New England-New York,

TABLE 62—AVERAGE VALUE OF FARM HOUSE PER FARM, BY PRINCIPAL HOUSING SECTIONS OF THE UNITED STATES, 1930 CENSUS DATA ON FARM HOUSING<sup>a</sup>

Section	Average Value of Farm Dwellings by Sections for		
	County with Highest Average Value	County with Medium Average Value	County with Lowest Average Value
New England-New York	\$3039	\$1595	\$1021
Central East	3145	2043	1100
Appalachian-Ozark Highlands	2521	827	220
Tobacco-Bluegrass	3958	1166	415
Cotton Belt	1069	555	250
Corn Belt	2787	1885	928
Northern Dairy . . . .	2958	1798	543
Great Plains . . . . .	1787	1350	435
Great Basin . . . . .	4348	1496	258
Pacific Northwest . . .	2144	1464	797
Pacific Southwest . . .	4075	1886	719

<sup>a</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 20.

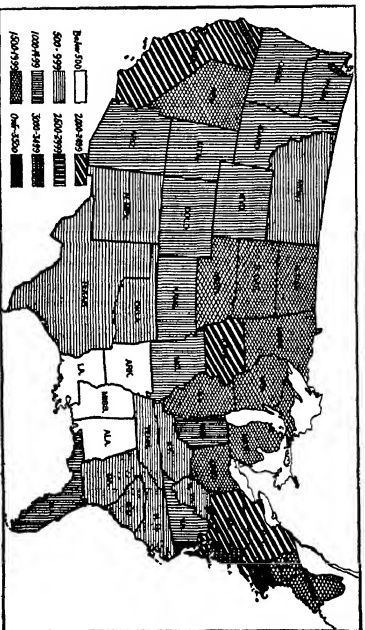


FIGURE 6—AVERAGE VALUE OF FARM DWELLINGS BY STATES, FEDERAL CENSUS, 1930  
 (From President's Conference on Home Building and Home Ownership, *Trade Report of the Committee on Farm and Village Housing*, p. 18.)

Central East, Corn Belt, Northern Dairy, Great Basin, Pacific Northwest and the Pacific Southwest sections stand highest in the average value of farm houses, and the Appalachian-Ozark Highlands and the Cotton Belt are the lowest.

The map on page 319 gives an even more complete picture of the rural housing situation in this country in that it shows the range of farm house values for every state. According to this map, the rural residences in the southern states—the Cotton and Tobacco Belts, and the tenant-cropper belts—are of the lowest value. The thirteen states referred to in the following quotation from the *Tentative Report of the Committee on Farm and Village Housing* constitute the Cotton Belt:

Over one-half of the farm population of the United States live in houses of quite low values. Starting with North Carolina and going south to Florida and west to and including New Mexico are eleven states, having over thirteen and one-quarter million farm people who live in territory in which the average value of the houses is less than one thousand dollars. If to these thirteen and one-quarter million, the farm population of West Virginia, Kentucky, and Montana are added, there is a total of approximately fifteen million, one-half of the total farm population of the nation, living in territory in which the average value of farm houses is less than one thousand dollars<sup>9</sup>

According to statistics on this subject, the physical condition of farm houses is practically always poor in the sections where the houses are old and of low value. As a matter of fact, there is likely to be a direct correlation between the state of repair of a farm house and its age and value. Statistics on condition and repair are given in Table 63.

The Committee on Farm and Village Housing considered the newness of the house and adequate, or at least a relatively high, income as the two factors which exerted the greatest influence on keeping the house in repair. Both these factors were present in the Pacific Northwest, but in the Great Basin newness was the more dominant. It was seen in Table 61 that 54.3 per cent of the farm houses in the Cotton Belt were less than twenty years old, but low farm income and tenancy combine to lower the general state of repair of the houses in this section, even in spite of this relative newness.

<sup>9</sup> President's Conference on Home Building, *Tentative Report of the Committee on Farm and Village Housing*, p. 17

TABLE 63.—PERCENTAGE OF FARM HOUSES IN POOR, MEDIUM, AND GOOD REPAIR, BY PRINCIPAL HOUSING SECTIONS OF THE UNITED STATES<sup>10</sup>

Section	Number of Houses For Which Information Was Obtained	Percentage of Total Number in		
		Poor Repair	Medium Repair	Good Repair
New England-New York	195	23 1	17 4	59 5
Central East	256	14 5	28 9	56 6
Appalachian-Ozark Highlands	183	54 1	7 6	38 3
Tobacco-Bluegrass	142	38 6	14 9	46 5
Cotton Belt	104	28 1	33 7	38 2
Corn Belt	103	34 9	14 6	50 5
Northern Dairy	183	25 2	23 5	51 3
Great Plains	196	53 0	2 1	44 9
Great Basin	59	17 0	18 6	64 4
Pacific Northwest	32	15 6	21 9	62 5

The size of the house is the only other item which needs to be considered in this section. Table 64 presents the best data available on the size of farm homes in terms of the number of rooms. From this table it is seen that the New England-New York, the

TABLE 64.—AVERAGE NUMBER OF ROOMS AND BEDROOMS PER FARM HOUSE; BY PRINCIPAL FARM HOUSING SECTIONS OF THE UNITED STATES<sup>11</sup>

Section	Number of Houses For Which Information Was Obtained	Average Number of Rooms per House	
		All Rooms	Bedrooms
New England-New York	190	8 1	4 3
Central East	260	7 6	4 0
Appalachian-Ozark Highlands	192	5 7	3 4
Tobacco-Bluegrass	127	6 4	3 3
Cotton Belt	817	5 4	2 7
Corn Belt	95	7 3	3 8
Northern Dairy	188	7 8	4 1
Great Plains	188	5 1	2 6
Great Basin	58	5 5	2 6
Pacific Northwest	33	7 3	2 9

<sup>10</sup> President's Conference on Home Building, *op. cit.*, Appendix II, p. 7<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 9

Central East, the Corn Belt, the Northern Dairy and the Pacific Northwest sections average more than 7 rooms per house, and that the average is less than 6 rooms in the Appalachian-Ozark Highlands, the Cotton Belt, the Great Plains, and the Great Basin sections. It should be noted that this variation in the number of rooms does not hold in the case of bedrooms, the average number of bedrooms being less than 3 per house in the Cotton Belt, the Great Plains, the Great Basin, and the Pacific Northwest. The size and type of the house are somewhat influenced by the farm enterprise, the climate, and prevailing customs, and therefore do not necessarily indicate a high or low standard of utility. For example, in the Cotton Belt, laundering, working up the meat supplies after butchering, and handling the dairy products are for the most part done out of doors; but in the Northern Dairy section and the Pacific Northwest, not only these, but often many other activities are carried on in the house itself. Two other factors have to be considered in relation to the number of rooms per house in the Cotton Belt: (1) southern farm families are larger than the average for the country as a whole, and (2) the many large so-called plantation houses raise the remarkably low average number of rooms and bedrooms per southern farm house.

The size of the house is an important factor in the arrangement of rooms, and, because of its consequent importance in the organization of the home, it will be discussed further in the subsequent section on home conveniences.

#### THE FARMSTEAD

**The Farm House Yard.**—Because of its ample space, the ground surrounding the farm house offers unusual advantages for making the farm home attractive, and this will be discussed more fully in the chapter on Rural Art. Inasmuch as planting is easy in the rural districts, the farm house yard should have a grassy lawn, plenty of shade trees, clump planting about the foundation and corners of the house, shrubs in the front, and a flower garden at the side or back. The old New England colonial house and the southern plantation house and yard were in many ways ideal, although they were usually larger than the average farm family required. Miss Atkeson points out that whereas the city house usually opens on the street, the farm house also opens to the side or back where the garden, well and various outhouses

are located, and where the farm men pass on their way to and from the barn and fields. Therefore, if the farm house is to be attractive to those who live and work there, as well as to passers-by, all of its surrounding grounds and buildings must be considered in its plan and construction.<sup>12</sup>

The question of sanitation is even more important in the location of the farm house than attractiveness and convenience. In the city, agencies outside of the home furnish water, sewage disposal, etc., but in the country the home must provide all these facilities itself. The choice of a location for the farm house must take into consideration the drainage from stock and poultry yards, protection from flies, the location of the privy, the disposal of garbage, sewage and sludge; and the arrangement and construction of the house must provide for the handling of milk and butter. A more detailed discussion of sanitation will be given in Chapter XVIII on Rural Health.

The problem of planning, planting and beautifying the farmstead has been given considerable attention by agricultural agents in recent years, and was the special concern of a sub-committee of the Committee on Farm and Village Housing of the President's Conference on Home Building and Home Ownership during 1931. In addition to information on the lack or prevalence of grassed lawns, trees, shrubs, and flowers for the sections into which this country was divided, Appendix VI of the *General Report* contains the following ten technical papers: "Farmstead Planning and Beautification," "Farmstead Location," "Building Arrangements," "Care of Plants," "Architectural Features for Home Grounds," "Vines for Ornament," "The Flower Garden," "Lawns," "Trees," and "Shrubs." This Appendix is a mimeographed book of 100 pages of instructions and illustrations, and is probably the best brief manual on the subject available. It presents the following criteria of efficiency and beauty which might well be adopted as a standard for the setting and organization of the farmstead:

1. Location of the farmstead in relation to the road for convenience, to afford good vistas and to avoid dust.

2. Arrangement of the farmstead to constitute a unified design

<sup>12</sup> Atkeson, Mary M., *The Woman on the Farm*, The Century Company, New York, 1924, chap. III.



for all the buildings, with the farm house the focal point, and to offer easy communication between them.

3. Location of the farm house to safeguard against drainage from stock and poultry yards, and as far distant as possible from offensive odors and flies.

4. Location of the home site near trees.

5. A work entrance from the farm buildings into the house, preferably through a washroom rather than the kitchen.

6. The location of the garage to be convenient for the house, but not obtrusive.

7. Fences and walks to be decorative as well as useful

8. The use of urns, vases, ornamental pottery, bird baths, sun dials, and the like, as yard decorations.

9. The use of vines to screen unsightly places, to cover walls and porches, and as a part of the general house planting scheme

10. Well planned flower gardens.

11. Well kept grass lawns

12. Trees and shrubs around the house

TABLE 65.—PERCENTAGE OF HOMES WITH LAWNS, TREES, SHRUBS AND FLOWERS; BY PRINCIPAL FARM HOUSING SECTIONS OF THE UNITED STATES<sup>12</sup>

Section	Number of Houses For Which Information Was Obtained	Per Cent of Total Number Having			
		Grassed Lawns	Trees	Shrubs	Flowers
New England-New York	194	76 8	91 8	55 7	33 3
Central East	223	23 6 <sup>a</sup>	93 3	65 9	64 1
Appalachian-Ozark High-lands	132	47 0	87 1	37 9	56 8
Tobacco-Bluegrass	136	51 5	91 9	24 3	64 0
Cotton Belt	764	48 0	86 9	18 2	47 0
Corn Belt . . . . .	100	89 0	98 0	23 0	61 0
Northern Dairy . . . .	189	49 7 <sup>a</sup>	96 8	56 1	55 0
Great Plains . . . . .	148	39 2	60 1	22 3	37 8
Great Basin . . . . .	57	86 0	96 5	3 5	68 4
Pacific Northwest . . . .	29	75 9	100 0	37 9	82 8

<sup>a</sup> These figures appear too low. The figure for the Central East would be expected to fall between the New England-New York and the Tobacco-Bluegrass figures, and that for the Northern Dairy section near the Corn Belt figure.

<sup>12</sup> President's Conference on Home Building, *op. cit.*, Appendix II, p. 19.

Only four of these criteria were included in the analysis of prevailing conditions in the principal farm housing sections in the United States, and Table 65 gives information on these four criteria. From this table it is clear that there are more often trees around the farmstead than either grassed lawns, shrubs or flowers. In the Great Plains, where planting is usually necessary if there are to be trees for either beauty or windbreaks, almost 40 per cent of the homes are bare of trees. The grassed lawn is the next highest ranking yard factor, and in this the Great Plains and the Appalachian-Ozark Highlands sections rank low, the first section probably because of the lack of moisture, and the other because of the excessive number of trees and rocks. As the footnote to the table indicates, the figures given for the Central East and the Northern Dairy sections may not be accurate. Shrubs rank the lowest of the four yard factors, and this in spite of the fact that they are more easily cared for than flowers, and that wild shrubs can often be gotten near the house. The Great Basin section is outstanding in the absence of shrubs, although the Great Plains, the Cotton Belt, the Corn Belt, and the Appalachian-Ozark Highlands rank very low. Indeed, if the data in this table are representative, it appears that from 60 to 65 per cent of our farm homes make no use of shrubs as part of their setting.

#### THE FARM HOUSE AND HOUSE CONVENIENCES

**The Arrangement and Size of the Farm House.**—The size and arrangement of the farm house are major factors in the convenience of the entire farm family in general, and of the farm woman in particular. The size of the house cannot be determined wholly by rule of thumb but should vary according to (1) the size of the family, and (2) the extent to which the house is used for other than purely housekeeping functions. The general assumption is that an adequate farm house will have a kitchen, dining room, living room, parlor, the necessary number of bedrooms, closets and, if possible, a bathroom and washroom. Although the size of the rooms may vary with the size of the family, only the bedrooms should vary in number. An acceptable standard for a family of five would probably be one and one-half rooms per person and, in the case of bedrooms, three-fifths of a room per person.

In Table 64 on page 321 data were given for the size of farm

houses, and it was seen that the New England-New York houses were the largest, and the Great Plains houses the smallest, but that houses in the Cotton Belt, the Great Basin and the Appalachian-Ozark Highlands sections were also small. With the exception of the Appalachian-Ozark Highlands, these same sections and, in addition, the Pacific Northwest ranked low in the number of bedrooms. If, where there are five in the family, the farm house has less than three bedrooms, the rooms are almost certain to be crowded and the living rooms also used for sleeping; and in farm houses of less than seven rooms, the rooms are almost certain to be used for several purposes. For example, the Committee on Farm and Village Housing found that in 14 to 18 per cent of the houses in the Cotton Belt, the Tobacco-Bluegrass and the Great Basin sections, rooms were used for both living and sleeping, and in almost 50 per cent of the houses studied in the Appalachian-Ozark Highlands, one room was used for both sleeping and living <sup>14</sup>

Rooms used for mixed purposes other than sleeping or living are almost as prevalent. The Committee found that the kitchen was widely used as a dining room, 40 per cent of the kitchens being thus used in the Tobacco-Bluegrass section, which had the lowest ranking on this point <sup>15</sup> In many instances some rooms are closed in the winter, the kitchen becoming the dining room, the living room becoming the parlor, and beds being moved into living room, dining room, and even into the kitchen. Conditions and practices such as these make for extreme inconvenience for the farm housekeeper.

**Work Conveniences.**—Overwork and its corollary, fatigue, constitute the greatest menace to the adequacy of the farm woman as housewife and mother, the drudgery of farm life is one of the chief causes of discontent among farm girls. Students of rural life are convinced that a great part of this overwork and drudgery could be dispensed with if there were the same concern for the farm woman's fatigue as there is for the farm man's, and if even a small part of the money spent for labor-saving equipment for the farm were used to purchase labor-saving conveniences for the home. No farmer would think of harvesting wheat with a cradle, or shelling corn or pumping water by hand; but he makes his

<sup>14</sup> President's Conference on Home Building, *op cit*, Appendix II, p. 1

wife get along with a washboard, a coal stove, and the old well, with no thought of the waste created by such labor-consuming equipment. However, the farmer should not be held entirely responsible for these conditions, for he is a part of a community—and a nation—which puts money above human values. Farm labor-saving devices lessen the cost of hired-man and horse power, and make it possible for the farmer to plant a large acreage and to cultivate it more thoroughly. The gain from farm home labor-saving conveniences is neither so obvious nor so easily measured in dollars and cents, it is apparent only in increased opportunities for child care, for home beautification and self-improvement, the value of which, through their very intangibility, is often overlooked. When this intangible value becomes apparent, the farmer will take the lead in providing conveniences and labor-saving devices for his home.

The situation on farm home equipment shown in Table 66 is probably above the average for these sections as a whole, for although 55,000 questionnaires were mailed, it is probable that only the more enlightened and progressive farm families replied, at any rate, it is certain that these averages are much higher than those for the country as a whole. A survey of 1014 farm families in North Carolina showed that 96.9 per cent of all the farm homes were heated by fireplaces, 98.6 per cent were lighted by lamps, 99.4 per cent of the washing was done on washboards, and 19.3 per cent of the homes had no sewing machines. Not one farm home had a vacuum cleaner, 99 per cent had no kitchen sinks, 98.1 per cent had no refrigerators, and 75.4 per cent had no carpets on the floors. Less than 1 per cent had running water, and none had power machines of any kind.<sup>18</sup>

Modern heating systems, which are among the more easily obtainable farm household conveniences, are at present less prevalent than running water. In Rankin's Nebraska study, only 8.8 per cent of the homes were found to be equipped with modern heating systems, while in the North Carolina study this was true of only 3.1 per cent of the homes.

The Committee on Farm and Village Housing found "that central heating systems are most commonly used in the New England-New York, the Corn Belt, the Northern Dairy and the

<sup>18</sup> Taylor, C. C., and Zimmerman, C. C., *op cit*, pp. 43-46.

TABLE 66 —EQUIPMENT OF FARM HOMES SURVEYED<sup>a</sup>

Section of Country	Running Water, Per Cent	Power Machinery, Per Cent	Water in Kitchen, Per Cent	Washing Machines, Per Cent	Carpet Sweeper, Per Cent	Sewing Machines, Per Cent	Screened Windows and Doors, Per Cent	Outdoor Toilet, Per Cent	Bath tub, Per Cent	Sink and Drain, Per Cent
Eastern	39	8	85	52	58	94	95	79	18	80
Central	24	22	60	64	46	95	98	89	19	52
Western	36	12	45	48	29	95	91	86	25	44
Average	32	15	65	57	47	95	96	85	20	60
Number of records	9374	9080	9374	9580	9513	9560	9667	9580	9679	9334

<sup>a</sup> Ward, Florence E, *op. cit.*, p. 10.

Great Plains sections where the climate is somewhat rigorous."<sup>18</sup> In none of these sections did the percentage of the homes which had central heating systems exceed 30.7, the Cotton Belt ranking lowest with 1.1 per cent. The figures on homes heated only by fireplaces were 46.5 per cent in the Cotton Belt, 21.0 per cent in the Tobacco-Bluegrass, 15.8 per cent in the Appalachian-Ozark Highlands, and 5.6 per cent in the New England-New York section. Heating by fireplaces alone, or by a combination of stoves and fireplaces, was found in 99.5 per cent of the houses in the Cotton Belt, 93.9 per cent of those in the Tobacco Bluegrass, 87.9 per cent of those in the Great Basin, 86.3 per cent of those in the Central East, and 75.6 per cent of those in the New England-New York sections, the "stove only" was the most general method of heating in every section except the Cotton Belt, where it was outranked by the fireplace.<sup>19</sup>

A hot and cold running water system and a kitchen sink are the conveniences which the farm woman probably wants most, for pumping and carrying water and heating it on the stove are thus eliminated, and dishwashing, laundering, cooking and cleaning are made easier. When one considers the great amount of kitchen work done by the average farm housekeeper, and realizes that any town or city kitchen without running water and a sink would be regarded as a very poorly equipped domestic workshop, it is apparent that the farm woman still has much to hope for. While over one-half of the farm homes are not yet equipped with these facilities, there has, nevertheless, been a marked improvement in recent years. Table 67 presents the findings of the Committee on Farm and Village Housing on this point.

Rankin shows from his Nebraska studies that "water piped into the house" does not necessarily indicate a modern water system, for it is the indoor toilet, the bathtub and running hot and cold water which constitute modern household conveniences. Although 1 in 6 of the homes he studied had "water piped in," only 1 in 16 had a modern water system.<sup>20</sup> Table 69 on page 331 gives statistics by states for the farm houses with piped-in water.

Furthermore, only by running water are modern toilet and bath facilities made possible. Toilet facilities are generally inadequate

<sup>18</sup> President's Conference on Home Building, *op cit*, pp. 13-14.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>20</sup> Rankin, J. O., *op cit*, p. 42.

## THE FARM RESIDENCE

TABLE 67—PERCENTAGE OF FARM HOUSES EQUIPPED WITH RUNNING WATER AND WITH KITCHEN SINKS, BY PRINCIPAL HOUSING SECTIONS OF THE UNITED STATES<sup>1</sup>

Section	Number of Houses for Which Information Was Obtained	Percentage of Houses Equipped with				
		Running Water		Kitchen Sinks		
		Hot and Cold	Cold Only	Sink and Running Water	Sink and Pump	Sink Only
New England-New York	191	43 8	34 8	44 5	26 8	26 7
Central East	249	25 8	5 7	19 6	5	4 0
Appalachian-Ozark Highlands	181	1 6	2 3	3 9	6	2 2
Tobacco-Bluegrass	113	23 9	8 0	27 8	1 9	3 7
Cotton Belt	718	9 0	10 0	18 2	5	3 8
Corn Belt	101	30 7	8 0	23 8	22 8	32 7
Northern Dairy	190	47 5	10 7	49 5	3 2	25 8
Great Plains	187	25 8	6	27 3		24 1
Great Basin	58	44 8	12 1			
Pacific Northwest	34	82 3	3 0	82 4		8 8

on farms; and while in most cases their installation has to await that of running water in the house, their installation by no means always follows, as a comparison of the data in Tables 67 and 68 will show. The open vault or outdoor privy is still the most general type of toilet on the American farm, about two-thirds of the farm homes either being equipped with this type or having none at all. It will be seen from Table 68 that stationary bathtubs are about 10 per cent more frequent than indoor water flush toilets, whereas bathtub equipment somewhat exceeds running water equipment as shown in Table 67.

Next to running water, farm people probably desire electricity more than any other household convenience, and modern lighting equipment is more universal than either running water or modern heating systems. Table 69 gives the number and percentage of farm dwellings, by state, which are lighted electrically. Electricity serves the whole family, making possible, in addition to electric

<sup>1</sup> President's Conference on Home Building, *op. cit.*, p. 15

TABLE 68 —PERCENTAGE OF FARM HOUSES EQUIPPED WITH STATIONARY BATH-TUBS AND WITH TOILET FACILITIES, BY PRINCIPAL FARM HOUSING SECTIONS OF THE UNITED STATES<sup>22</sup>

Section	Number of Houses for Which Information Was Obtained	Percentage of Houses Equipped with				
		Stationary Bath-tubs	Toilet Facilities			
			Indoor Flush <sup>a</sup>	Closed Vaults	Open	None
New England-New York	196	56 7	37 7	3 1	57 8	5
Central East	232	16 0	14 3	2 3	83 1	3
Appalachian-Ozark Highlands	173	5 3	3 7	45 5	44 5	6 3
Tobacco-Bluegrass	138	31 6	18 1	29 7	43 3	7 9
Cotton Belt	699	15 8	10 1	1 0	81 8	7 2
Corn Belt	83	35 0	21 1	11 6	65 4	1 9
Northern Dairy	167	35 4	23 6	13 7	62 7	
Great Plains	167	28 2	22 3	16 5	61 2	
Great Basin	58	36 3	34 6		65 6	
Pacific Northwest	34	79 5	67 5		52 5	

<sup>a</sup> Includes other than water flush toilets in one or two cases, but the number of these was too small to warrant a separate classification

TABLE 69 —NUMBER AND PERCENTAGE OF FARM DWELLINGS HAVING PIPED-IN WATER AND BEING ELECTRICALLY LIGHTED, ACCORDING TO THE 1930 CENSUS<sup>23</sup>

	Number of Farms, 1930	Water Piped into House		Dwellings Electrically Lighted	
		Number	Per Cent	Number	Per Cent
Alabama	257,395	5,182	2 0	6,459	2 5
Arizona	14,173	4,083	28 8	3,671	25 9
Arkansas	242,334	3,690	1 5	5,121	2 1
California	135,676	97,639	72 0	85,941	63 3
Colorado	59,956	12,314	20 5	9,393	15 7
Connecticut	17,195	10,716	62 3	9,063	52 7
Delaware	9,707	1,500	15 5	1,561	16 1
Florida	58,966	7,559	12 8	6,489	11 0
Georgia	255,598	7,877	3 1	7,499	2 9
Idaho	71,644	9,970	23 9	12,809	30 7

<sup>22</sup> President's Conference on Home Building, *op cit*, p 16

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid*



## THE FARM RESIDENCE

TABLE 69.—(Continued)

	Number of Farms, 1930	Water Piped into House		Dwellings Electrically Lighted	
		Number	Per Cent	Number	Per Cent
Illinois	214,479	42,391	19.8	34,231	16.0
Indiana	181,570	35,451	19.5	30,335	16.7
Iowa	214,928	51,635	24.0	46,042	21.4
Kansas	166,042	28,045	16.9	20,720	12.5
Kentucky	246,499	8,378	3.4	10,691	4.3
Louisiana	161,445	4,964	3.1	4,174	2.6
Maine	39,006	19,121	49.0	12,920	33.1
Maryland	43,203	10,352	24.0	9,145	21.2
Massachusetts	25,598	19,083	74.5	16,037	62.6
Michigan	169,372	40,872	24.1	34,785	20.5
Minnesota	185,255	23,124	12.5	23,342	12.6
Mississippi	312,663	5,593	1.8	4,792	1.5
Missouri	255,940	21,308	8.3	20,223	7.9
Montana	47,495	5,382	11.3	3,547	7.5
Nebraska	129,458	38,357	29.6	21,380	16.5
Nevada	3,442	1,215	35.3	1,139	33.1
New Hampshire	14,906	10,995	73.8	6,160	41.3
New Jersey	25,378	12,359	48.7	13,441	53.0
New Mexico	31,404	2,804	8.9	1,691	5.4
New York	159,806	59,276	37.1	55,019	34.4
North Carolina	279,708	9,308	3.3	15,006	5.4
North Dakota	77,975	5,844	7.5	6,192	7.9
Ohio	219,296	64,104	29.2	56,704	25.9
Oklahoma	203,866	10,820	5.3	8,091	4.0
Oregon	55,153	24,265	44.0	18,397	33.4
Pennsylvania	172,419	64,064	37.2	45,638	26.5
Rhode Island	3,322	1,887	56.8	1,910	57.5
South Carolina	157,931	5,176	3.3	6,067	3.8
South Dakota	83,157	12,089	14.5	9,070	10.9
Tennessee	245,657	8,018	3.3	10,010	4.1
Texas	495,487	68,920	13.9	22,854	4.6
Utah	27,159	10,561	38.9	15,778	58.1
Vermont	24,898	18,013	72.3	7,565	30.4
Virginia	170,610	15,291	9.0	13,009	7.6
Washington	70,904	34,476	48.6	34,056	48.0
West Virginia	88,641	9,650	11.7	5,330	6.4
Wisconsin	181,767	28,454	15.7	46,565	25.6
Wyoming	16,011	1,995	12.5	1,145	7.2

lights, the use of vacuum cleaners, electric irons and refrigerators, and all the other electrical equipment now available for lightening and facilitating housework. The electrification of rural districts has now almost become a movement, and its progress in the next

decade will probably surpass all that has been done in the past toward this end.

#### FACTORS RESPONSIBLE FOR FARM HOUSING CONDITIONS

**Factors Tending to Poor Housing Conditions.**—Every study thus far made indicates that low farm income and tenancy are the two most dominant factors making for poor housing conditions on the farm. We have already noted that there is almost always a close correlation between the general rural standard of living and rural housing. All standard of living studies show the relationship between income and levels of living, and, among low-income farm family groups, housing conditions are shown to be poor, and home conveniences, few.

In practically any given section, the tenant house is smaller, less valuable, in worse repair, and equipped with fewer conveniences than the owner house. Even a cursory study of the tables in this chapter reveals that the chief tenant area of this country, the Cotton Belt, ranks lowest in almost all the criteria of good housing and home conveniences. While the difference between owner and tenant houses is not as marked outside the Cotton Belt and the Tobacco-Bluegrass section, it is nevertheless present to some degree in every section. A more detailed treatment of this appears in Chapters VIII and IX on the Rural Standard of Living, and in Chapter XI on Farm Tenancy.

**Factors Tending to Good Housing Conditions.**—Just as low farm income and tenancy make for poor housing, so high farm income and ownership make for good housing conditions. In addition to these two basic factors, there is the work of all the other agencies whose function is to improve farm housing and to promote a more adequate home life—farm and home demonstration agents, farm engineers, landscape gardeners and architects, horticulturists, farm journals, state Departments of Health, Better Homes in America, general farm organizations, the Bureau of Home Economics and the Rural Life Division of the United States Department of Agriculture, all kinds of bulletins from state and federal agencies, a number of well known publications like *House Beautiful*, *The Ladies Home Journal*, and *Better Homes*, painting and home beautifying contests, and even such organizations as the Boy Scouts and the Girl Scouts.

In conclusion we present two standards for the measurement of

good rural housing; one, a quotation from *The Better Homes Manual*, and the other, a score card worked out by a member of the Committee on Farm and Village Housing. The quotation follows

The essentials of housing which general standards of health and decency would support include shelter from the elements, light, ventilation, water supply, disposal of waste, privacy, space for play and family gatherings, arrangement and equipment affecting the amount of labor required for housework, appearance and general attractiveness, housekeeping maintenance, and improvement as the family needs develop and its taste improves <sup>24</sup>

### A SCORE CARD FOR THE FARM HOUSE<sup>25</sup>

This score card for the farm house is intended to be used by individuals as a basis for the study of their own homes as well as by Extension Service workers, Parent-Teachers' Associations, Women's Clubs, Smith-Hughes teachers in home economics and agriculture, and commercial organizations. The weightings given on the score card are only suggestive and should be modified to meet local requirements

I THE HOUSE AND ITS SURROUNDINGS		1000 POINTS
A The site		250
1 Location		70
a Convenient to farm activities and outside communication		20
b With good air and water drainage		20
c With good outlook		10
d Inviting from principal viewpoints		10
e To avoid dust and noise at house		10
2 Relation of house to farm buildings		50
a To facilitate work		20
b To present good appearance		10
c To reduce fire hazards so far as practicable		10
d So that summer winds carry odors away from house		10
3. Drives and walks		60
a Approach so arranged that visitors go to main entrance		20

<sup>24</sup> Gries, J. M., and Taylor, J. S., "Housing Standards," *The Better Homes Manual*, edited by Blanche Halbert, University of Chicago Press, Chicago.

<sup>25</sup> President's Conference on Home Building, *Special Reports*, Appendix III, pp. 1-6

## THE FARM RESIDENCE

335

b	Drive so arranged that automobile can return to highway without entering workyards	10
c	Drive to barns not too close to house	15
d	Suitable connections to other farm buildings	15
4	Plantings	70
a	Well placed lawn with good turf	20
b	Trees for framing, shade, and protection	25
c	Shrubs to make the grounds home-like without being suffocated	25
B	The exterior	250
1	General appearance	100
a	Simple in line and detail	40
b	Well proportioned, preferably low and broad	60
2	Doors and windows	75
a	Suited to living requirements	50
b	Placed for good appearance	25
3	Color scheme—soft and pleasant	75
C	Materials, construction, and finishes	250
1	Material suited to locality	50
2	Strong, fire-resistant construction	50
3	Weather-tight doors, windows, roof and walls	50
4	Exterior surfaces treated for protection and decoration	50
5	Interior finishes easily cleaned and of pleasing appearance	50
D	Cost of the farm house	250
1	In proportion to earning power of farm and family, approximately twice the amount spent per year for family living, including value of living furnished by the farm	250

## II. THE HOUSE AS A DWELLING 1000 POINTS

A	Room arrangement	150
1	Main entrance convenient to kitchen but leading to living rooms	25
2	Rear entrance direct to living or dining room without going through the kitchen.	25

3. Kitchen and work areas located at rear of house with view toward farm buildings and highway	20
4. General service room and laundry near kitchen	25
5. Stairway to cellar convenient to kitchen and rear entrance	15
6. Living room where there is best view	15
7. Bathroom convenient to bedrooms	25
B. Living facilities	100
1. Space for entertaining friends, neighbors and over-night guests	20
2. Space and equipment for privacy of family members	25
3. Equipment and space for rest on main floor	10
4. Space and equipment for correspondence, reading and children's play	25
5. Space for convenient placing of furniture to avoid interference with doors and windows	20
C. Kitchen, laundry and general service facilities	150
1. Kitchen size, minimum 90 sq ft to maximum 150 sq ft (for preparing, cooking, serving and cleaning up only)	20
2. Kitchen work centers grouped to save steps—important pieces of equipment not more than 12 ft apart	30
3. Adequate kitchen equipment with working surfaces that allow worker to stand and sit normally	30
4. Equipment and space for laundry	20
5. Space apart from kitchen for storing and preparing farm products	20
6. Wash space for men apart from kitchen work centers	20
7. A business desk near an outside entrance	10
D. Storage facilities	100
1. Refrigeration for perishable foods maintaining temperature below 50° F.....	20

2. Ample storage space for small and large quantity staples, canned products and vegetables	20
3. All fuel storages conveniently located	10
4. Cabinet space in kitchen for small and large utensils, kitchen tools and linens	15
5. Closet for cleaning equipment	5
6. Wrap closets at main and rear entrances	20
7. Bedding and linen closet.	10
E. Sleeping facilities	100
1. One bedroom for every two persons—minimum 100 sq ft	50
2. Cross ventilation	30
3. Clothes closet space equipped with shelf, and rod for hangers	20
F. Lighting	100
1. Natural	50
a. Glass area one-fifth of floor area	10
b. Each room having at least one exposure, kitchen, living and sleeping areas preferably two	10
c. Direct sunlight entering at least three-fourths of rooms	10
d. Natural light on all work surfaces	10
e. Passages and stairways lighted	10
2. Artificial	50
a. Safe, easily controlled lights for all rooms, passages and stairs	25
b. Adequate and convenient illumination for all work surfaces	15
c. Restful, pleasing lighting for reading and social centers	10
G. Heating equipment	100
1. Maintains comfortable temperature throughout the house	30
2. Burns available fuels safely and economically	20
3. Simple and dependable	20
4. Clean and convenient	20
5. Silent and unobtrusive	10
H. Water supply and plumbing	120
1. Adequate supply of water suitable for household purposes.	40

## THE FARM RESIDENCE

2	Supply protected from either surface or underground pollution . . . .	20
3	Kitchen sink with convenient supply of water and drain . . . .	20
4	Dependable supply of hot and cold water under pressure . .	20
5	Bathroom, laundry, and washroom equipment.....	20
I.	Sanitation . . . . .	80
1	Waste disposal.....	50
a	Septic tank, cesspool or screened privy, located to avoid pollution of water supply.. . . .	30
b	Covered cans for garbage emptied daily . . . . .	10
c	Cleanliness in waste disposal	10
2	Screens . . . . .	30
a	Doors and windows in regular use fitted with screens, 14 to 16 meshes per inch . .	20
b	Screens kept in good condition	10

TOTAL

2000

## QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

- 1 Is the house in which the farm family lives, or the expenditures on farming operations, a better index to the general rural standard of living?
- 2 What are the chief handicaps of an old house?
- 3 Why do the farm houses in the Cotton Belt rank so consistently low in all the criteria of good housing?
- 4 Which rooms in a farm house do you think should be larger, and which smaller, than in a city house?
- 5 Which household convenience would you rank first in importance in the farm home? Why?
- 6 In view of the fact that they can be furnished in individual units, why are central heating plants not more common on farms?
- 7 If you were a farm woman, would you rather have a kitchen sink or a central heating system?
- 8 The score card at the end of this chapter gives 1000 points for "The House and its Surroundings," and 1000 points for "The House as a Dwelling." Do you think these proportions are correct?
- 9 Discuss and criticize the number of points in the score card allotted to "Room arrangement," "Living facilities," "Kitchen," "Storage facilities," "Sleeping facilities," "Lighting," "Heating equipment," "Water supply," and "Sanitation"

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## CHAPTER XV

### THE PROBLEM OF RURAL EDUCATION

#### THE FIELD AND FUNCTION OF RURAL EDUCATION

THE problems of rural education are much greater in scope and magnitude than those of the rural school alone. Teaching children is not the sole task of education, nor is the school the only teaching agency, for people learned long before there were schools. Education is based upon the learning process; and the greatest educational fallacy in the world is the belief or assumption that it consists of a series of learned categories, pyramided one upon the other, from the A B C's to graduation from college. This learning process, whether in school or elsewhere, consists of making adaptations and adjustments to, and utilizations of, the actual conditions and circumstances of life, wherefore it is the process of learning, and not merely the school categories, which is important in life.

Educational agencies include all the means by which ideas and experiences are transmitted from one individual to another; schools are merely well organized pieces of social machinery by means of which the experiences of other generations are made available to each succeeding generation. As a matter of fact, schools play a relatively small part in the total learning process of humanity. For example, a child who enters a grade school at the age of six, attends regularly for eight months of the year, and completes the elementary grades in eight years, will have spent in school only about six per cent of the waking hours of his life. During the rest of his life he will be learning, although the stimuli will be other than those furnished by a school course of study.

This chapter will seek to show that a tremendous educational program is being developed in rural communities, that a thorough understanding of rural life makes it impossible to restrict rural education to school education alone; and that any rational at-

tempt to solve the problem of rural education demands that the various agencies discussed be utilized, and that they in turn enlarge their programs, functions and values to the end that enlightenment and progress may be developed to the maximum in rural communities.

Every type of rural education is cast in the midst of farming and farm life conditions, for the great majority of those born in the open country are reared there and spend their lives in that environment. But every rural person is more than a citizen of his local community; he is a member of the Great Society, and as such there is no reason why his life should not be enriched by the history, art, and literature of all ages. Furthermore, the entrance of science and commerce into agriculture places upon the modern farmer the necessity of making use of the scientific and business knowledge that is part of the modern process of all civilized life. The problem of rural education, therefore, is that of teaching how to live, work, earn and enjoy life for the most part—although not entirely—in the open country.

**Agencies of Rural Education.**—Rural education, like all education, is generally thought of merely in terms of educational institutions; but to narrow the discussion to a consideration of the rural school alone would be as foolish as to narrow a discussion of the field of ideas to a consideration of books only, merely because books contain ideas. Just as the rural school is not the sole agent of rural education, so its problems do not include all the problems of rural education. The agencies of rural education range all the way from rural social family gatherings to agricultural colleges.

Some appreciation of the relatively minor rôle played by the rural and agricultural school and college in a complete program of rural education may be obtained by enumerating the various agencies which are working in the field of rural education, many of which are not directly concerned with vocational training or the rural school: the rural grade school, the high school, the farm life or agricultural school, the agricultural college and university, the agricultural press, the country weekly, other newspapers and magazines, bulletins of the United States Department of Agriculture, bulletins of state departments of agriculture, books, demonstration agents and other extension service experts, public lectures—Chautauqua, lyceums, pulpit, etc.—and rural libraries, rural

fairs, rural life conferences, the Y M.C A. and Y.W.C.A.; health, recreational, and other civic organizations, and, recently, the radio. From this it must be clear that neither the agricultural college nor the rural grade school has a monopoly on either the function or the programs of rural education

The problems of the rural school as an educational institution, and the function, purpose and program of rural education itself differ so widely that we shall devote the following chapter to the discussion of the problems of the rural school. The present chapter will consider the educational agencies, other than the rural school, which operate in rural communities for the benefit of farm people. We shall consider as agencies those with a consistent program for helping farm people to make a progressive adjustment to the changing circumstances of life, for there can be no complete program of rural education unless it is projected on the basis of comprehending the whole of rural life.

**Agricultural Education and Rural Education.**—Everyone has understood agricultural education to be the specific training for the occupation of farming, and likewise everyone has apparently understood rural education as that which is provided in the rural grade schools. Strange as it may seem, no confusion has ever existed between these two types of education; indeed, they have differed so greatly in their purpose, organization and conduct that it may well be questioned whether they should not be more closely connected, or at least borrow with profit from each other.

Agricultural education has, until very recently, consisted of technical courses in agriculture—soils, crops, animal husbandry, horticulture, etc.—and of courses in the basic sciences—botany, zoology, chemistry and physics—necessary for the understanding and analysis of these technical factors. The agricultural college curricula have generally included also courses in English, mathematics, and other so-called liberal and disciplinary courses; and recently the college authorities have recognized the desirability and even the necessity of training men and women for an all-round efficient farm life and, in the case of some of these educators, for a well rounded life in all respects. To this end courses have been added not only in those social sciences which are strictly rural in nature, but also in history, literature, modern language, and general economics and commerce, and these courses have been brought directly to the farm through the development of

extension divisions. There have been agricultural high schools here and there for a number of years, but since the passage of the Smith-Hughes Vocational Education Bill, hundreds of others have been developed.

With the expansion, or at least the liberalization, of agricultural college curricula on the one hand, and the pushing down of vocational agricultural training into secondary and even the grade school curricula on the other hand, the relationship between agricultural and rural education has become closer

### THE RURAL PRESS

**Agricultural Journals and Periodicals.**—Because agricultural journals are primarily commercial enterprises, they are seldom thought of as educational agencies; but when we realize that the circulation of such journals in this country is over fifteen million, we are compelled to recognize them as powerful rural educational agencies. It is the author's opinion, although it is of course impossible to cite exact figures, that at least one-half of our farm entrepreneurs read agricultural journals. There are probably 500 farmers who get their scientific knowledge from farm papers, to one who gets it from an agricultural college, and this ratio was even more marked before the modern development of the elaborate extension services of these colleges. In 1922, the thirty-seven farm journals in this country had a circulation of over 100,000 each, ten, over 300,000, six, over 500,000, and one, over 1,000,000;<sup>1</sup> and by 1930, forty-one had a circulation over 100,000, ten, over 500,000, and five, over 1,000,000.<sup>2</sup> Even though thousands of these papers which are circulated are not read, and thousands of pages carry commercial advertisements, the fact remains that thousands of them *are* read and accepted as official manuals and guidebooks by hundreds of thousands of American farmers.

As a rule, these journals are edited by men whose advice is sound, whose language is easily understood by the farmer, and whose information is current and up to date. The high type of men who serve as editors is shown by the fact that each Secretary

<sup>1</sup> 1922 *American Newspaper Directory*, N W Ayer and Son, Inc., Philadelphia

<sup>2</sup> 1930 *Directory of Newspapers and Periodicals*, N W Ayer and Son, Inc., Philadelphia, pp 1228-1237

of Agriculture during the administrations of President Wilson and President Coolidge was an editor of an agricultural journal, and there were two such editors on the original Federal Farm Board. Agricultural editors are called into every official state or national rural conference of any importance, and they serve as leaders of rural progress in every section of the country. Before the day of the county agents, the influence of individual editors in agricultural leadership in the area in which their papers circulated exceeded the combined influence of any three agricultural colleges. Because thousands of farmers value the advice of these editors more than that of any other person, agency, or institution, the agricultural press must be regarded as one of the most powerful of all the rural educational agencies.

One of the chief criticisms of agricultural colleges is that they must necessarily organize their teaching into, and offer it through, established curricula. Once these curricula are established, the courses, like all other institutional phenomena, tend to become fixed, and the result is that these colleges are often five to fifteen years late in attacking pertinent agricultural problems.<sup>3</sup> Agricultural journals, on the other hand, are flexible, and consequently they have been the first to instruct farmers in agricultural engineering, farm management, veterinary science, farm marketing, rural social problems, diversified farming, and even in many phases of scientific production. Furthermore, they cover a wider range of instruction than the agricultural colleges, for they give information on health and sanitation, good roads, recreation, religion, and home and community organizations—subjects which agricultural colleges apparently do not recognize to any great extent as essential or valuable to farmers. They discuss civic affairs on their editorial pages; they seek to idealize farm life by means of stories, poems and pictures. In short, the prime function and the accepted rôle of the agricultural journal is to guide the rural dweller into a well rounded knowledge of his occupation and a deeper appreciation of farm life.

Agricultural journals, with their influence and wide circulation, could become even more powerful rural educational agencies and leaders of rural progress than they are at present. Their failure

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<sup>3</sup> Taylor, Carl C., "The Rural Press as an Educational Agency," *Proceedings, Fifth American Country Life Conference*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1922, pp. 60-67.

TABLE 70—AN ANALYSIS OF SPACE IN AGRICULTURAL JOURNALS GIVEN TO DIFFERENT FARM SUBJECTS\*

Papers	Technical Production, Per Cent	Piction and Nature Study, Per Cent	Marketing, Per Cent	Home and Family, Per Cent	Cooperation Other Than Marketing, Per Cent	Citizenship and Politics, Per Cent	Education and School, Per Cent	Social News and Social Con- tacts, Per Cent	Agricultural Engineering, Per Cent	Health and Sanitation, Per Cent	Transportation and Com- munication, Per Cent	Recreation, Per Cent	Labor, Per Cent	Religion and Church, Per Cent	Total Space Other Than Advertising, Inches	County to Court Advertis- ing, Inches	Town to Community Adver- tising, Inches	County to Town Advertis- ing, Inches	Self-Advertising, Inches	Total Advertising Space, Inches	Total Space, Inches
A. . . . .	18 6 12 6	3 2 3 2	4 5 1 9	1 18 4 38	2 02 2 1	1 1	00	24	06	54 4	14 630 3	12 442 5	00 2 6 57 1	28	24 45 5	100	100	100	100	100	100
B. . . . .	20 7 4 24	8 1 5 16	33 1 4	1 6 08	03 49	00	07	00	42 8	42 8	12 442 5	11 832 7	4 4 3 9 52 1	00 2 6 57 1	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
C. . . . .	26 4 1 14	7 63 3 7	4 1 93	1 68	00 1 17	76 80	00	09	00	47 7	11 832 7	18 143 9	00 56 02 6	4 4 3 9 52 1	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
D. . . . .	6 5 1 5	10 5 4	3 8 3 00	78 1 2 4	82 54 1	07	02	00	03	37 34	13 549 04	36 8	00 62 7	00	00 62 7	100	100	100	100	100	100
E. . . . .	17 5 4 1	3 7 96 7	07 2 1	00 00	54 00	59 11	00	00	00	36 8	13 549 04	36 8	00 62 7	00	00 62 7	100	100	100	100	100	100
F. . . . .	11 4 7 76	3 2 3 1	58 2 08	1 8 12	66 93 9	2 2	09	3	36 9	20 542 7	8 347 9	15	4 63 9	66	18 57 9	100	100	100	100	100	100
G. . . . .	20 6 1 5	4 2 3 6	2 3 2 1	5 1 00	8 5 12	00	59	00	59	00 42 9	8 347 9	15	4 63 9	66	18 57 9	100	100	100	100	100	100
H. . . . .	16 3 6 24	1 28 4 9	2 8 3 42 4	16 89	17 96 1 6	53	00	00	59	44 7	1 4 52 6	13 240 7	4	8 55 1	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Per cent of total space . . . . .	16 7 6 2	5 4 3 9	3 2 2 02	1 8 1 6	1 3 1 05	7 3	17	13	44 8	13 240 7	4	8 55 1	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Per cent of total space other than advertising . . . . .	37 3 13 6	12 05 8 7	7 1 4 5	4 2 3 5	2 9 2 3	1 6 67	38	29	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

These percentages were obtained by measuring the column inches of sixteen consecutive issues of each of these papers during 1921. These are general agricultural journals chosen from all sections of the United States.

to appreciate the comparative importance of certain rural life issues is indicated in Table 70, which analyzes the type of education these journals are offering. The eight papers in the table represent about 10 per cent of the total circulation of all the agricultural journals in the country. An analysis of twenty different journals during 1919 and 1920 gives almost the same percentages as those in the table, the chief exceptions being in some of the papers in the earlier study which were specialized—fruit, dairy, and breeders' journals. Consequently the percentage of space given to technical production ran higher, and cooperation and marketing were receiving more attention and space in the later study.

The value of agricultural journals as agencies in influencing rural life could be even greater if more space were given to the institutional phases of farm life. In both of the foregoing studies, an average of less than 1 per cent of the total space was devoted to the rural home, the rural church, the rural school, and rural recreation, and only a little over 1 per cent of their total news and editorial space to each of these institutions. In no paper in either study did farm labor problems receive as much as 1 per cent of the total space. The relative importance of the different items discussed in these papers, based on the relative amount of news and editorial space, was as follows. (1) technical production, (2) fiction and nature study, (3) marketing, (4) home and family, (5) cooperation other than marketing, (6) citizenship and politics, (7) education and schools, (8) social news and social contacts, (9) agricultural engineering, (10) health and sanitation, (11) transportation and communication, (12) recreation, and (13) labor.

In a questionnaire submitted to over one hundred teachers and students of rural life and agriculture in three agricultural colleges representing three distinct sections of the country, these thirteen items were ranked according to their importance in rural life, in the following sequence: (1) education and schools, (2) home and family, (3) technical production, (4) marketing, (5) cooperation other than marketing, (6) health and sanitation, (7) church and religion, (8) transportation and communication, (9) recreation, (10) labor problems, (11) citizenship and politics, (12) agricultural engineering, and (13) fiction and nature study.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>8</sup> Study made by the writer at the University of Missouri, University of Texas, and North Carolina State College, from 1921 to 1926.

These data are presented here simply to make possible a better understanding of the type of material agricultural journals are using, and not as a means of establishing this combined judgment of these students of agricultural problems as an absolute criterion of the educational needs of farm communities, for it is impossible to establish any such criterion. Although the agricultural press is almost always a commercial enterprise, and as such must be conducted with an eye to business, nevertheless, measured by any accepted method, it must be appraised as a universal and powerful agency of rural education.

**The Country Weekly.**—It is probably safe to say that over one-half of our weekly newspapers are "country weeklies."<sup>8</sup> N. W. Ayer and Son stated that, in 1924, 11,500 of the 14,300 weekly papers in the United States and Canada were small-town newspapers, and that in 1930 weekly papers were published in 9878 different towns, of which 2932 were county seats. Most of these towns have only one weekly newspaper, and this paper is very likely to have an almost complete monopoly of the constituency of its own town and of the immediately adjacent rural territory. Formerly, the chief function of these country papers was that of relaying to the country world news from the great dailies, national magazines, and other metropolitan sources. Today country people themselves subscribe to the dailies for, like everyone else, they want the news while it is hot. Country papers cannot compete with these powerful rivals as dispensers of world news and of sound and scholarly editorial opinion, or as national advertising media, and a weekly paper which can only reflect the news and ideas presented in the large city dailies is therefore little read.

In a letter to a prospective country editor, Horace Greeley many years ago gave the following advice:

Begin with the clear conception that the subject of deepest interest to an average human being is himself; next to that he is most concerned about his neighbors. Asia and the Congo stand a long way after these in his regard . . . Do not let a new church be organized, or new members be added to one already existing, a farm be sold, a new house be raised, a mill be set in motion, a store be opened, or anything of interest to a dozen families occur without having the fact duly, though briefly, chronicled in your columns. If a farmer

<sup>8</sup> Bing estimates about 10,000 in 1920. See Bing, P. C., *The Country Weekly*, D. Appleton and Company, New York, 1920, p. 3.



cuts a big tree, or grows a mammoth beet, or harvests a bounteous yield of wheat or corn, set forth the fact as concisely and unexceptionally as possible. . . . In short, make your paper a perfect mirror of everything done in your county that your citizens ought to know.<sup>7</sup>

The number of country weeklies is steadily diminishing because of the competition of the now easily available daily paper. In 1920, about 16,000 such weeklies were published in this country, in 1922, there were 14,622;<sup>8</sup> by 1924, this number had decreased by about 1300; and by 1929, it had fallen to only 11,205.<sup>9</sup> In spite of this steady decrease in number, country weeklies undoubtedly still constitute a powerful rural educational agency. Although the country weekly is no longer read by anyone except small-town and open-country dwellers, it circulates among these people more universally than any other type of publication, and should therefore be distinctly an agent of rural community service. Its opportunity for influence among these people is more widespread than that of any other type of publication and is as great as that of any other rural agency, with the exception of the rural home and possibly the rural school. It therefore behooves the editors and publishers of such papers to magnify things of value to the community, and to discover and develop new values.

A detailed study of 243 country weeklies in Missouri and of 73 in North Carolina revealed the following facts.<sup>10</sup>

1. The 243 Missouri papers contained a total of 205,588 column inches of space.

2. Almost exactly 75 per cent of this space was devoted to material of strictly local interest, the other 25 per cent being made up of national, syndicate, boiler plate, patent inside, fiction, and clipped materials, none of which concern local matters.

3. Town interests took up 73.4 per cent of all the space given to local material, as against 26.6 per cent for strictly rural interests.

4. As the size of the town in which these papers were published increased, the percentage of space given to strictly local material decreased.

<sup>7</sup> Quoted from Bing, P. C., *op cit*, pp. 17-18.

<sup>8</sup> 1922 *American Newspaper Directory*.

<sup>9</sup> 1930 *Directory of Newspapers and Periodicals*, pp. 12-13.

<sup>10</sup> Taylor, Carl C., "The Country Newspaper as a Town-Country Agency," *Proceedings of American Country Life Association*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1921.

5 Of the total editorial space, 69.49 per cent was given to local editorials

6 Of the total local editorial space, 92.7 per cent dealt with town interests, and 7.3 per cent, with rural

7 Only 38.56 per cent of the total news space was given to local news, the remaining being given to national, syndicate and clipped news, to patent insides and boiler plate

8 Of the local news, 82.2 per cent was town, and only 17.8 per cent country

9 Local advertising received 77.8 per cent of the total advertising space

10 Of the total local advertising, 68.9 per cent was town, as against 31.1 per cent country (Country advertising covered advertisements of goods bought or sold mainly by country people)

11 Editorials had the greatest percentage of space in the papers over 75 per cent of whose circulation was country, and the smallest percentage in the papers with 25 per cent or less country circulation

12 The space given to news increased steadily as the percentage of country circulation increased, being much lower in the papers with 25 per cent or less open-country circulation.

13 Only 15.2 per cent of the local news was strictly country news. The percentage was greatest (16.4) for those papers with from 51 to 75 per cent country circulation, and much the lowest for those with 25 per cent or less country circulation

Over half the circulation of almost 60 per cent of the total number of these papers was in country homes, and slightly over 60 per cent of the total inches of reading space went to country homes. This, plus the fact that almost 93 per cent of these papers were published in towns of 4000 population or less, makes these weeklies almost wholly country papers. That the editors of these papers are recognizing that the papers are local is indicated by the fact that over 60 per cent of their total space is given to local interests, but that they do not yet recognize that they are country papers is indicated by the fact that less than 20 per cent of their total local space is given to country interests. In this lies the chief criticism of these papers as country service and rural progress agencies, and the main cause of their lack of vitality.

Wiley says of the thirty-five Connecticut weeklies covered by his study, that "more than three-fourths of the papers, for the

period studied, devoted less than one-half of their reading space to local news which was selected by the editor and put into type specifically for the local paper."<sup>11</sup> He shows that space was allotted as follows: sports, first; politics, second; economics, third; opinion, fourth, and cultural, fifth.<sup>12</sup>

If the country weekly is to survive, if it is to perform the function it alone can perform, it must become rural—even agricultural—in its vision, purpose and content. The small towns in which it is published are a part of country communities, and these country communities need an agency which can make them community conscious. The local paper can best do this, but its editorials must be rural-community-civic, its news must deal with the local rural community, and its advertising columns must be largely for local community services. This means that the country weekly must be a combination newspaper and agricultural journal. It needs to be correlated with the work of county and home demonstration agents, county superintendents of schools and public welfare, county health officials, rural community and religious programs; with technical agricultural interests, good roads movements—in short, with everything of vital concern to rural people which needs editorial support, news reporting, or advertising. The task of the country weekly is to magnify and multiply its services to the rural community, and when this has been accomplished, its thousands of weekly issues with their hundreds of thousands of pages will become a dynamic rural educational agency.

#### RURAL READING MATTER

**Types of Rural Home Reading Matter.**—It is probably true that too great emphasis has been placed on the comparative dearth of reading matter found in country homes. Although a number of surveys have gathered information on the types and amount of reading matter in rural homes, a comparison between country and town homes in this respect has been made in only one limited survey.<sup>13</sup> This study, made in Nebraska, showed that there was about the same amount of reading matter in both farm and small-

<sup>11</sup> Willey, M. M., *The Country Newspaper*, University of North Carolina Press, Chapel Hill, 1926, p. 6.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 84.

<sup>13</sup> Rankin, J. O., "Reading Matter in Nebraska Farm Homes," *Bulletin No. 80*, Nebraska Agricultural Experiment Station, Lincoln, 1922.

town homes. In fact, it is probable that the reading matter in the average farm home ranks far above that of the average city day laborer, compares favorably with that of the average city business man, but ranks far below that of the professional man.

In addition to the agricultural journals and the country weeklies discussed above, daily papers, religious papers, national periodicals, books and bulletins are also found in rural homes. It would be impossible, on the basis of their frequency in the home, to calculate which of these types of reading matter exerts the

TABLE 71.—READING MATERIAL IN 107 NEBRASKA FARM HOMES, 1921<sup>14</sup>

	All Homes		Owners		Tenants	
	Number	Per Cent	Number	Per Cent	Number	Per Cent
Total number	107		41		66	
Take newspaper	107	100	41	100	66	100
Take farm paper	106	99.1	40	97.5	66	100
Get books from library	28	26.4	17	41.4	11	16.6

TABLE 72.—THE NUMBER OF BOOKS IN THE HOMES OF 306 CENTRAL MISSOURI FARMERS, 1920<sup>15</sup>

	Owner		Tenant	
	Number of Homes	Per Cent	Number of Homes	Per Cent
No books at all	16	6.69	9	13.43
1 through 25 books	75	31.38	19	28.35
26 through 50 books	43	18.00	17	25.37
51 through 100 books	41	17.15	9	13.43
101 through 200 books	20	8.36	3	4.48
201 through 300 books	28	11.71	6	8.96
301 through 500 books	6	2.51	4	5.95
501 through 750 books	4	1.67	0	0.00
750 through 1000 books.	6	2.51	0	0.00
Total	239	99.98	67	99.97

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid*<sup>15</sup> Data from unpublished manuscript by author

greatest influence on rural people; and even if this calculation were possible, there would still be no measure of their comparative influence. However, since each type is a potential educational agency, we shall attempt to give some understanding of each one, and to evaluate its significance to rural people.

The accompanying tables represent the best information available on reading matter in farm homes. The first three are taken from studies of typical, well-to-do middle-western farm communities; Tables 74 and 75 are based on a study of a middle-western community made up chiefly of tenant and hired-man families, and Tables 76 and 77 are taken from a study of three southern farm communities

TABLE 73—THE NUMBER OF PAPERS, MAGAZINES, AND BULLETINS IN HOMES OF 306 CENTRAL MISSOURI FARMERS, 1920<sup>18</sup>

Types of Material	Owner			Tenant		
	Number Received	Average per Family	Per Cent not Getting	Number Received	Average per Family	Per Cent not Getting
Daily newspapers	332	1 37	16 6	71	1 04	25 37
Weekly newspapers	328	1 37	32 2	71	1 04	49 25
Religious papers	133	55	69 8	71	1 04	34 32
Farm papers	403	1 65	28 4	19	27	73 12
Magazines	248	1 03	50 2	83	1 20	35 82
Agricultural bulletins	100 <sup>a</sup>		59 1	19 <sup>a</sup>		71 16

<sup>a</sup> Means only that this many families receive some agricultural bulletins. No information was obtained as to the frequency of the receipt of these bulletins.

The following are some of the outstanding generalizations which can be made from these tables

1. The agricultural or farm journal is the most generally prevailing type of current reading matter in farm homes. The daily paper is second, although weeklies outrank it in the southeast Missouri community; the country weekly is third, and the magazine, fourth.

2. The quantity of reading matter is less for the southern farm families studied than for those in the middle west

<sup>18</sup> The data in Tables 73 and 74 are from study made by author (unpublished).

TABLE 74.—READING MATERIALS IN THE HOMES OF FARM FAMILIES IN A SOUTH-EAST MISSOURI COMMUNITY, 1920

Types of Material	41 Owners		180 Tenants		29 Croppers		179 Hired Men	
	Total Hav- ing	Per Cent Hav- ing	Total Hav- ing	Per Cent Hav- ing	Total Hav- ing	Per Cent Hav- ing	Total Hav- ing	Per Cent Hav- ing
Daily papers	23	56 1	62	34 4	2	6 9	8	4 5
Weekly papers	30	73 1	121	67 2	8	27 6	47	26 4
Religious papers	11	26 8	27	15 0	0	0 0	10	5 61
Farm papers	36	87 8	125	69 4	10	34 5	52	29 2
Weekly magazines	13	31 7	38	21 1	3	10 3	16	8 9
Monthly magazines	20	48 8	53	29 4	7	24 1	31	17 4
United States De- partment of Agri- culture bulletins	14	34 1	32	17 8	1	3 4	0	0 0
Missouri Depart- ment of Agricul- ture bulletins	11	26 8	21	11 7	0	0 0	0	0 0
College of Agricul- ture bulletins	9	21 9	21	11 7	0	0 0	0	0 0
Health bulletins	1	2 4	6	3 3	0	0 0	0	0 0
Having none	1	2 4	21	11 7	15	51 8	91	51 1

3. Both the quantity and diversity of reading matter are greater in farm owners' homes than in the homes of any other tenure status.

4. Almost no health or agricultural bulletins are found in the homes of farmers of the lower tenure status.

5. Tenant, cropper, and hired-man farm families lag behind farm owners more in book equipment than in current reading matter.

There are unquestionably thousands of farm communities and hundreds of thousands of farm homes in which the reading matter is both greater in quantity and better in quality than is shown in any of these tables. For example, a survey of 40 homes in Ashland Community, Howard County, Missouri, showed an average of 117.5 books and 7 newspapers and magazines per home. One of these homes had 634 books; another, 500; 9 families had over 250 books each. One family subscribed to 16 peri-

## 354 THE PROBLEM OF RURAL EDUCATION

TABLE 75.—TYPES OF BOOKS IN HOMES OF FARM FAMILIES IN A SOUTHEAST MISSOURI COMMUNITY, 1920<sup>17</sup>

Type of Book	41 Owners		180 Tenants		29 Croppers		179 Hired Men	
	Total Hav- ing	Per Cent Hav- ing	Total Hav- ing	Per Cent Hav- ing	Total Hav- ing	Per Cent Hav- ing	Total Hav- ing	Per Cent Hav- ing
Religious	41	100 0	160	88 9	24	82 8	143	80 3
Agriculture	22	53 6	44	24 4	1	3 4	14	7 9
History	25	60 9	60	33 3	4	13 8	38	21 3
Fiction	15	36 6	48	26 7	3	10 3	33	18 4
Children's	17	41 4	43	23 9	1	8 4	26	14 7
Others	16	39 0	77	42 8	10	34 5	80	44 9
Having none	0	0 0	5	2 8	4	13 8	26	14 7

TABLE 76.—PERCENTAGE OF FAMILIES WHO BORROW BOOKS IN THREE TYPICAL NORTH CAROLINA FARM COUNTIES, 1922<sup>18</sup>

Region	Operator Landlords		Owner Operators		Tenants		Croppers	
	White	Black	White	Black	White	Black	White	Black
Coastal								
Plain	25 0		5 0	20 0	15 6		6 9	
Piedmont	8 6		6 3					
Mountain	20 3		27 8		12 7		7 9	
Total	17 7		19 8	2 33	11 2		6 2	

odicals and newspapers, 2 families, who pooled their magazine subscriptions, were taking 27 different periodicals. The subject matter of the books in these Missouri homes was, on an average, as follows: fiction, 47.5 volumes; history, 7.0 volumes, agriculture, 4.3 volumes; religion, 4.2; science, 3.9, health, 2.0, and war, 1.0. Every family in the community had a real home library,

<sup>17</sup> From unpublished studies made by the author<sup>18</sup> Taylor, Carl C., and Zimmerman, C. C., *op cit*, p. 72

TABLE 77—KIND OF BOOKS IN HOMES OF 1014 FARM FAMILIES IN THREE TYPICAL NORTH CAROLINA COUNTIES, 1922<sup>18</sup>

	Land Owners	Land-less	White	Black	All
Per cent religious	14 0	6 5	13 3	7 4	12 4
Per cent agricultural	1 3	2 9	1 9	0 4	1 6
Per cent fiction	19 4	16 7	19 8	8 4	18 8
Per cent children's	22 1	32 8	20 7	49 2	24 4
Per cent others	43 2	41 1	44 3	34 6	42 8

except two foreign tenants, one of which had no books, and the other, only children's school books<sup>20</sup> This middle-western community is as far at one extreme in this respect as the community in North Carolina or southeast Missouri is at the other.

None of the studies from which the foregoing tables are taken has attempted to determine which type of home reading matter is read most universally and most consistently by farm families Reading habits cannot be judged solely on the basis of the number of books in the home, for a family's library is often the accumulation of a number of generations rather than the books the family uses most often, and the presence of books on religion, health, history and war is often due more to a book agent's zeal than to an individual's desire for this type of reading matter. However, some information has been secured on the type of books read and wanted by rural people For example, O. S. Rice, of the office of the State Superintendent of Education for Wisconsin, made a survey of the books in 150 Wisconsin high school libraries, and found that the books selected by country boys differed little from those chosen by city boys, every book selected by both groups of boys being fiction<sup>21</sup> The author made a direct study of 1809 books which the North Carolina Library Commission circulated in rural communities in 1921 These unit boxed libraries went into 61 different communities, were read by people of all ages, and offered

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>20</sup> Taylor, Carl C, and Lehmann, E. W, *An Economic, Social, and Sanitary Survey of Ashland Community, Howard County, Missouri*, Missouri Agricultural Experiment Station, Columbia, 1920

<sup>21</sup> Dudgeon, M. S., "The Rural Book Hunger," *Rural Manhood*, September, 1915, p. 303



practically every legitimate type of book one would want to read. The findings of this study are shown in Table 78

TABLE 78—FREQUENCY OF USE OF DIFFERENT KINDS OF BOOKS

Type of Book <sup>a</sup>	Number of Books in Circulation	Per Cent of Total in Circulation	Times Read	Per Cent of Total Read
Fiction	938	46 3	2630	51 4
Children's books	624	34 4	1730	33 7
History	149	8 2	350	6 8
Useful arts	75	4 1	129	2 3
Philosophy	28	1 5	69	1 3
Sociology	30	1 6	58	1 4
Literature (poetry, etc)	19	1 05	35	65
Fine arts	13	71	32	62
Religion	9	49	31	60
General works	12	66	28	54
Natural science	12	66	24	47

o not doubt that the preference of the books read was dictated by the numbers of different books presented. However, the Commission works on an experimental basis, and aims to supply whatever demand is made for legitimate books.

Waples and Tyler included a group of Vermont farmers in a study entitled "What People Want to Read About." These farmers "expressed preferences for books on economics, political and vocational subjects. Military preparedness was a topic among the 'highest tenth' in interest. They showed average interest in sports, in what makes a successful marriage, movies, international good will. Analysis of library demands actually made by Vermont farmers indicated that the main interests were the home garden, actors and actresses, artists and musicians, interesting places abroad, chemical inventions, exploration and discovery, detection and prevention of crime, aviation, animals, comments on modern America, motion pictures, child training."<sup>22</sup>

The following conclusions are warranted by the facts revealed in all these studies of rural reading matter:

<sup>22</sup> Willard, J. D., and Landis, B. Y., *Rural Adult Education*, The Macmillan Company, New York, 1933, chap. III, Taylor, H. C., et al., *Rural Vermont*, The Vermont Commission on Country Life, Burlington, 1931, pp. 272-279.

- 1 Daily, weekly, and farm papers are becoming almost universal in farm homes
- 2 Practically every farm home has some sort of a library
- 3 The reading equipment is almost universally better for owners than tenants, and for tenants than for croppers or hired men
- 4 The number of books, papers, and magazines in the home is in direct proportion to the amount of education of the farmers and their wives
- 5 Farm people will read books if given the opportunity
- 6 Their choice of books is normal and healthy in every respect The truth of this statement is not apparent from any of the tables presented herewith, but the statement was supported whenever this particular point was checked

#### OTHER AGENCIES OF RURAL EDUCATION

**The Rural Library.**—Rural people do not use the books made available to them through the recent establishment of public libraries, to the same extent that city people do. For one thing, all the large public libraries are located in great cities. However, libraries are now being established in smaller cities and rural towns, and there is generally one in towns with a population of 10,000, and hundreds of county seats with a population from 2000 to 5000 have libraries. Nevertheless, only 794 of the 2964 rural counties in this country had a public library of 5000 volumes or more in 1925.<sup>23</sup> In 1931 only 223 counties in the United States had libraries receiving county appropriations of as much as \$1000 per year for "county public library service," and 46 of these counties were in California.<sup>24</sup> The libraries, except those in homes, from which rural people draw books, are those of other families, public schools, Sunday schools and churches; books are also taken from commercial libraries, nearby town libraries, and state, county, and township circulating libraries. County library service is also furnished to rural people by such organizations as The Book Automobile, which is active in Washington County, Maryland, in Cass County, Indiana, and in some counties in Michigan and Minnesota, the Y.M.C.A. and the Y.W.C.A.,

<sup>23</sup> Long, Harriet C., *County Library Service*, American Library Association, Chicago, 1925; see also *Library Extension*, American Library Association, 1926

<sup>24</sup> Mimeograph release from A. L. A. Library Extension Board, Chicago, May 1, 1931.

parent-teacher associations, the Red Cross, and other similar agencies. In some places community libraries are located in stores, post offices, and even farm houses, thus books can be easily available for those who apply for them.

In 1921, the North Carolina Library Commission circulated 11,047 books, and the cards showed 2,000,000 book loans in 96 counties, an increase in two years of 181 per cent. In the south-east Missouri study referred to above, which covered a community composed almost entirely of tenant-croppers and hired men, books were borrowed from neighboring school or town libraries by 36 per cent of the owners, 22 per cent of the tenants, 8 per cent of the hired men, and 7 per cent of the croppers.

Undoubtedly the greatest encouragement to wider reading by rural people would be the development of adequate and well located public libraries, for books purchased by a common fund and circulated through a common medium will be read by more people than those purchased by individuals and as a rule read only once. In his article, "The Rural Book Hunger," Dudgeon presents a rather dark picture of such a need,<sup>25</sup> but this is offset to some extent by the fact that rural people make great use of the library facilities now available to them. According to Vogt, nearly 100,000 volumes per year were circulated from the Brumback Library in Van Wert County, Ohio, in 1917.<sup>26</sup> The free public library in Stockton, California, with a rural circulation of 6281 volumes, served 30 communities and 22 school districts in 1921.<sup>27</sup> Traveling libraries are also playing their part, for Dudgeon says that 16 out of 17 children in three rural homes in which there were no books had read 61 books circulated by these traveling libraries.

The American Library Association recommends the country library supported by taxes as the most feasible means of supplying rural people with library books. Miss Long gives a detailed description of the various degrees to which different states and counties have furnished some kind of library service for their rural inhabitants, and the following quotations are taken from her book: "County libraries were first established in Indiana in

<sup>25</sup> Dudgeon, M. S., *op cit*, p. 303.

<sup>26</sup> Vogt, P. L., *Introduction to Rural Sociology*, D. Appleton and Company, New York, 1917, p. 274.

<sup>27</sup> "The Library at Your Door," *Farm Journal*, November 22, 1921.

1916 and provision made by the general assembly in 1918 for the establishment of country libraries in six additional counties. The one established in 1916 was in Pike County, Indiana."<sup>28</sup> "In 1925, county library laws were to be found in 29 states, most of them enacted in the last decade."<sup>29</sup> California has been more active than any other state in establishing a county library service, 42 of her 58 counties had such service in 1925. "Over two and one-half million books were available to the people of these 42 counties through more than four thousand branches and stations"<sup>30</sup> Six branch buildings were erected in Kerr County in 1922,<sup>31</sup> during 1923-1924 the Monterey County Free Library had 62,107 books, over 8000 subscribers, and a total expense for that year of \$18,483 08.<sup>32</sup> "In 1931, in California alone, 11,256,465 volumes were circulated by county libraries. In Minnesota . . . 647,253 volumes were circulated"<sup>33</sup> The Library Extension Board of the American Library Association reported for the period April 1, 1931, to January 31, 1932, a permissive county library law passed in Florida, state aid for county libraries in Pennsylvania, and the passage of a regional library law in Michigan.<sup>34</sup>

**Education through Demonstration Work.**—The greatest technical agricultural work now being done in this country is that of the farm and home demonstration agents and the agricultural extension workers. This work is logically—and, as a rule, actually—a part of the extension work of the colleges of agriculture, but it is discussed as a separate agency because it has not universally been tied up with the colleges, because it is supported by federal, state and county governments in cooperation, and because there is some slight indication that the time may come when, instead, it will be supported in part or totally by organized farmer groups. From the agricultural college's point of view, demonstration work is extension teaching, but from the farmer's, it is practical farm experimentation leading to better farming methods in local communities.

Demonstration work, as a systematic scheme of rural educa-

<sup>28</sup> Long, Harriet C., *op cit*, p. 15.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 35.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 29.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 100.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 34.

<sup>33</sup> Willard, J. D., and Landis, B. Y., *op cit*, chap. iv.

<sup>34</sup> Bulletin of the American Library Association, Chicago, April, 1932.

tion, was started in 1903 in Kaufman County, Texas, under the direction of Dr. Seaman A. Knapp and the United States Department of Agriculture. It reached the peak of its development in 1918-1919 because of the great need for farm efficiency during the World War, and during that fiscal year, 75 per cent of the counties in this country each had an agricultural agent, and 33 per cent each a home demonstration agent. More than 275,000 farmers actively cooperated in extension work, and about 125,000 farm women cooperated in home demonstration work. The funds available for agricultural extension work during that year amounted to \$14,600,000.<sup>85</sup>

The function and method of demonstration work can best be set forth by the following quotation from its originator, Dr. Knapp: "The Farmers' Demonstration work may be regarded as a method of increasing farm crops and as logically the first step toward true uplift, or it may be considered a system of rural education for boys and adults by which a readjustment of country life can be effected and placed upon a higher plane of profit, comfort, culture, influence, and power."<sup>86</sup>

In an address to the State Teachers' Association of South Carolina in 1912, W. W. Finley, former president of the Southern Railroad, spoke of this demonstration work as follows:

Splendid as have been the results of Dr. Knapp's cooperative farm demonstration work, I believe that by far the most important thing he ever undertook was the inauguration of the Boys' Corn Club Work. The immediate and primary effect of this work is seen not only in the records of the large yields made by individual members of the Boys' Corn Clubs throughout the South, but in the increasing yield per acre in all the states resulting from the stimulation of interest in the best cultural methods and in seed selection. If the Boys' Corn Clubs had done nothing more, their records would stand as an imperishable monument to the memory of Dr. Knapp. But in my opinion the most important results are not in the raising of corn, but in the raising of farmers. They are essentially agricultural schools. The boy who hopes to make creditable showing or a record-breaking crop, and to do so by methods that will yield a profitable margin over the cost of production, must be a student. The members of the Boys' Corn Clubs

<sup>85</sup> True, A. C., *A History of Agricultural Extension Work in the United States, 1785-1923*, Government Printing Office, Washington, D. C., 1928, p. 151.

<sup>86</sup> Martin, O. B., *The Demonstration Work*, Stratford Company, Boston, 1921,

not only acquire theoretical and practical knowledge as to the best methods of growing corn, but I believe that their work in these clubs tends to imbue them with a thirst for knowledge and that they will grow up into scientific and progressive farmers, whose work will lift the standard of agriculture throughout the nation <sup>87</sup>

This rather elaborate quotation brings out the educational significance of only one phase of demonstration teaching, boys' and girls' club work. There are today in this country thousands of boys' corn, pig and calf clubs, and hundreds of farm boys who were first inspired to scientific agriculture by these junior demonstrations have gone to college and returned to the farm as rural-life leaders. In one year, 1918, home demonstration agents organized 9026 girls' clubs in 15 southern states, with a total membership of 286,278. What the corn and pig and calf clubs have done and will do for farm boys, the canning, cooking, and sewing clubs have done and will do for farm girls.

Demonstration and extension teaching has expanded its activities to such proportions that anything but the briefest outline of its program, method and attainment is impossible here. The essence of its educational method was probably expressed by Mr. Lever in a report to the Committee on Agriculture of the House of Representatives, in which he said.

The fundamental idea of the system of demonstration or itinerant teaching, presupposes the personal contact of the teacher with the person being taught, the participation of the pupil in the actual demonstration of the lesson being taught, and the success of the method proposed. It is a system which frees the pupil from the slavishness of the textbooks, which makes the field, and even the parlor and the kitchen, classrooms. It teaches us to learn to do by doing! As President Wilson said, "It is the kind of work which, it seems to me, is the only kind that generates real education"; that is to say, the demonstration process and the personal touch with the man who does the demonstration <sup>188</sup>

The county demonstration agents are the central working unit of demonstration and extension work, for it is through them that the agricultural college, the state departments of agriculture, the agricultural experiment stations, the United States Department

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 50-51.

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 39.

of Agriculture, and many others make felt their power as educational agencies. The whole system functions as a thoroughly coordinated institution, reaching, in one way or another, every farm community and every farm dweller in the country, and formulating a program of rural education with which the national, state and local governmental units cooperate. Although it was originally concerned solely with technical production, it now includes all phases of rural education and efficiency, from better care and nutrition for babies, on.

Demonstration work could never have attained its present proportions by using any other teaching technique, for the farmer did not accept it until it taught by demonstration. However, its chief significance is not its use of this demonstration technique, but rather the fact that it is reaching hundreds of thousands of rural people, young and old, who without it would not now be at the fore in technical farm and educational progress.

Its future development was discussed by Dr C. B. Smith, Assistant Chief of the Office of Cooperative Extension Work, in the following statement:

Judging by the experience of the past ten years, the future trend of the influence of cooperative extension work will be toward

1—Increasing group thought and action as a habit in country neighborhood life

2—Encouraging conscious effort on the part of the country people to retain and capitalize the best features and attractions of the country life and to work out for themselves the soundest way in which to make available to their young people and to themselves, the best in education, recreation, and social life which the country and town afford.

3—Expanding boys' and girls' club work and developing supplementary agencies that will make the practical influence of extension association, teaching, and training as available as the public-school education to all country boys and girls

4—Furthering opportunities for the economic and social development of the farm woman that will place her on a more equitable footing with the modern, wage-earning woman of the city in standards of living and in opportunities for community activity and personal improvement

5—Stimulating ambition for a more satisfying home and neighborhood life on the part of the farmer and his family based on healthful

and sensible tastes and ideals and on a community of thought, appreciation and action.<sup>39</sup>

He gives further information on its work:

The average number of practices reported adopted during the five-year period 1920 to 1924 is slightly in excess of 4,000,000 per year. This figure does not represent different farms and homes, since the same farm might be reached in connection with dairy as well as with potato activities and the same home with clothing as well as with house furnishings. It is probable that nearly 3,000,000 different farms and homes have been effectively reached each year through extension.<sup>40</sup>

In 1924, 48,125 farms and homes were influenced to beautify home grounds, compared with 47,416 in 1923. Junior demonstrations, however, dropped from 16,130 to 12,766, and adult demonstrations from 20,003 to 13,491.<sup>41</sup>

During 1924, 5,019 farmers were assisted in installing drainage systems, 24,451 terraced according to directions, 2,872 sewage-disposal systems were installed, 21,457 farmers remodeled buildings other than dwellings, and 50,603 farmers cleared their cut-over land according to improved methods advocated by extension agents.<sup>42</sup>

In 1924, farm accounts were kept by 16,867 farmers, or by approximately the same number as in 1923. In all, 5,985 boys and girls completed the work outlined for the farm-management clubs, or practically the same number as in 1923. On the advice of the extension agents, 30,288 farmers made changes in the management of their farms, and 11,898 farmers were advised regarding leases, 15,510 farmers cooperated in keeping cost-of-production records, and 12,150 farmers were assisted in obtaining credit.<sup>43</sup>

In 1924, 138,537 different homes put into practice up-to-date methods of preparing food for the family.<sup>44</sup>

In 1924, 24,534 junior and 13,972 adult demonstrations were carried to completion. Recommended health practices were followed in 60,394 homes, and 68,373 homes accepted better sanitary methods, of

<sup>39</sup> Smith, C. B., *Cooperative Extension Work, 1924, with Ten-Year Review*, Government Printing Office, Washington, D. C., 1926, pp. 12-13.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 14.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 25.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 28-29.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 31.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 33.



which number 7,838 were screened and 5,372 provided with sanitary closets <sup>45</sup>

In 1924, 510,355 boys and girls were enrolled in club work, of which 283,283 completed projects undertaken and submitted written reports of the results obtained.<sup>46</sup>

Although club work is based on the demonstration conducted by the boy or girl on the farm or in the home, the training for more efficient citizenship has been one of the outstanding results. Young people in clubs have learned to use parliamentary procedure; they have learned to express themselves intelligently at a meeting; and they have learned to sing and participate in wholesome play and contests for the social advantages they afford <sup>47</sup>

More than a million people attended the special and regular meetings for the promotion of extension work among Negroes. To this impressive total the number of fairs and exhibits should be added. Negroes made exhibits at 815 different community, county, and state fairs, and these exhibits were seen and studied by thousands of people <sup>48</sup>

The total amount of money expended for extension work by the Federal, State and county governments and from other local sources in 1924, was \$19,082,025 04. During that year there were 2,084 counties which had men county agents and 930 counties which had women county agents.<sup>49</sup>

The Capper-Ketcham Act, entitled "An Act to Provide for the Further Development of Agricultural Extension Work," etc., was passed in 1929 and amended in 1930, and provided for an immediate increase of \$980,000, and an upward graduation until it reaches \$6,000,000 per year for the fiscal year 1936. Since these funds must be met with "state off-sets," this will mean that in 1936 the amounts given in the above paragraph will be increased by \$12,000,000 at the minimum. In addition to the funds which require "state off-set," this Act provides for \$490,000 per year, or \$10,000 to each continental state, and to Hawaii. It is evident, therefore, that in 1936 a minimum of \$32,000,000 per year will be expended in Cooperative Agricultural Extension work <sup>50</sup>

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 36

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 77

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 85.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 95.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 128 and 131

<sup>50</sup> See H. R. 2471. 71st Congress, 1st Session, and H. R. 8870 71st Congress, 2d Session

**Agricultural and Home Economics Vocational High Schools.**—A rural educational agency of almost equal magnitude to extension work, and destined, some people believe, to outrank the work of the county agent, is what is known as the Smith-Hughes, or vocational agricultural and home economics, secondary education. This work, begun in 1917, offers, in schools supported by federal, state, or local funds, four types of vocational courses: "all day" courses (in regular high schools), "evening courses" (for adults), "part time" courses, and "day units" (the last two for those who are unable to give full time to school work). In 1929 there were 106,844 students enrolled in "all day" agricultural courses, and 29,873 in "all day" home economics courses. Table 79 presents the total enrollment figures for all four types of agri-

TABLE 79—NUMBER AND SEX OF PUPILS ENROLLED IN VOCATIONAL AGRICULTURE COURSES, AS APPROVED BY THE FEDERAL BOARD OF EDUCATION, BOTH FEDERALLY AND NON-FEDERALLY AIDED, 1924<sup>61</sup>

	Evening	In Agricultural Schools		
		Part-time	All Day	Day Unit
Male	45,973	5,764	103,044	9,616
Female	2,925	38	94,730	306
Total	48,898	5,802	197,774	9,922
Grand Total	262,396			

cultural courses in 1929. These agricultural courses, which numbered 6533 in 1929, were manned by 22,144 specially trained teachers.<sup>62</sup> Therefore they afford and accomplish what is probably the most systematic agricultural training available to the farm people of the United States. The enrollment in 1929 in the four types of home economics courses was 249,113 individuals, many of whom were undoubtedly farm women and girls. The evening courses are beginning to resemble the type of education offered by the "people's schools" in Denmark.

The sum expended in 1929 by federal, state, and local units of government for vocational agricultural education was \$8,418,-

<sup>61</sup> *Annual Report, Federal Board for Vocational Education*, Government Printing Office, Washington, D. C., 1929, pp. 60-61.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 56, 58.

981.20.<sup>58</sup> But not everyone pursuing vocational training in agriculture and home economics is enrolled in schools supported by federal funds, for in seven states—Arkansas, Colorado, Indiana, North Carolina, Oklahoma, Texas and Wisconsin—these schools are organized on state plans and supported wholly by state and local funds.

From the facts thus far given, it can be seen that thousands of boys and girls are now receiving systematic classroom training in agriculture and home economics, in addition to which, a specific year-round supervised home or farm project is required from each student

**Agricultural and Rural Community Fairs.**—The whole idea of fairs has received something of a black eye because in many sections the county fair has developed into a combination of a street carnival and horse racing, but recently agricultural and community fairs have become part of the modern movement of dynamic rural education, for they teach by demonstration, exhibit, and pageantry. The influence of demonstration and extension teaching, the introduction of agricultural education in primary and secondary schools, and the general enlightenment of farm people have developed a type of fair with a greater educational value than any rural fair which existed previous to the advent of the carnival and the professional horse race. The United States Department of Agriculture and colleges of agriculture now issue bulletins giving information on methods for organizing and conducting fairs along legitimate lines, and the value to be derived from them in their promotion of every phase of rural social and economic life, and schools, communities, townships, counties, cities, states, Farm Bureaus, Granges, and Farmers' Unions are now also conducting fairs.

The local rural community fair in particular has developed into a most desirable educational agency. Exhibits, generally few in number, can be fully classified so that every type of product and every phase of community activity can be presented separately, and score cards can be devised on which are shown in detail the fine points of merit of the exhibit. The diversified farm, the "live at home" or "food and feed farm," "the home convenience house," and other features of social and economic value can be exhibited for the benefit of the whole community, and the exhibits

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 69.

can be presented per farm, per home, per school, or on the basis of any other unit. Contests among the boys and girls can be carried on under the direction of farm and home demonstration agents or other experts, groups and community games can be demonstrated and taught, and school and community pageants staged. In short, everything connected with farming and farm life can be exhibited, demonstrated and taught, and thus there can be developed in the community a pride in its own best self as presented through the rural community fair.

These same methods and values should be more highly developed on a larger scale in community and state agricultural fairs, and every possibility suggested is now being practiced in one or more places. The best exhibits in the local fairs could and should be taken to the county fairs, and the best county exhibits should be shown in the state fairs. Unit exhibits can be shown in these larger fairs by whole communities, counties and states. States, particularly those that are dominantly agricultural, should organize special fair departments to unify and magnify the technique of fairs and their value as an educational agency, and states in the same agricultural section could well afford to stage inter-state fairs.

**The Public Platform.**—Although the type of education which is offered from the public platform is likely to be considered primarily as entertainment, the fact remains that dozens of platform performances afford some kind of education to farmers.

There is almost no community in the moderately or thickly settled rural areas of this country without an annual Chautauqua or Lyceum program, and many communities have the Chautauqua during the summer and the Lyceum course during the winter. The Chautauqua is an institution which thrives best and does probably its best work in county seats and smaller towns; farmers constitute a good part of its audience, and, as Keith Vawter says, "Broadly speaking, we believe the Chautauqua to be a rural institution." The data in Table 80 cover the work done by seven of these companies. Two Chautauqua companies have discontinued the special programs or lectures for farmers which they offered in the past, for they have found that farmers want entertainment, and not "shop talk," from their platform. Practically all the companies experience difficulty in finding suitable farm subjects and speakers for the Chautauqua type of program, and all are agreed

TABLE 80.—STATISTICS ON SEVEN CHAUTAUQUA COMPANIES<sup>44</sup>

Company	Per Cent of Performances in Towns of over 2,500	Per Cent of Performances in Towns of 2,500 to 10,000	Per Cent of Performances in Towns of over 10,000	Per Cent of Attendance by Rural People	Giving Special Farmer Programs
A	75	20	5	75	No
B	75	10	15	15	No
C	100	0	0	50	No
D	40	52	8	20	Yes
E	82	14	4	10	Yes
F	80	15	5	20	No
G	50	40	10	25	Yes

that any lecture intended to appeal primarily to farmers must deal not with technical agriculture but with community problems. Notwithstanding the fact that the Chautauquas are not concerned with teaching the farmer how to farm, they do nevertheless offer him education as well as entertainment, for every aspect of life and every corner of the world, every current interest and every civic problem is discussed or exhibited on these platforms, and this education is probably the most cosmopolitan the farmer gets.

**Civic and Welfare Organizations as Educational Agencies.**—State and county health officials, the Y M C A and the Y. W. C. A., the National Recreation Association, and many other similar agencies, now have definitely organized rural educational programs. State, county and community councils, and other agencies with specific religious, recreational or other programs, contribute to various phases of rural education; and education is one of the primary functions of all the general farm organizations. The actual work of these various agencies will be discussed in other chapters.

### QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. What educational agency do you think is the most powerful in the rural life of the United States?
2. Is a complete agricultural education an adequate rural education?
3. Comment on the statement that agricultural journals have been more powerful rural educational agencies than agricultural colleges.

<sup>44</sup> Information furnished by the seven leading Chautauqua companies of the United States.

- 4 Should country weeklies be semi-agricultural journals? Discuss fully
- 5 What kinds of books and periodicals should farm people read?
- 6 What do you think of the statement, "The agricultural extension program of the agricultural colleges of the United States is the single biggest project in adult education in the world"?
- 7 What are the shortcomings in rural life from the point of view of the educational opportunities offered?
- 8 Some people believe that the agricultural vocational high schools are destined to be more powerful as rural educational agencies than the agricultural extension work. Do you agree? Discuss fully.

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## CHAPTER XVI

### THE PROBLEM OF THE RURAL SCHOOL

#### THE RURAL SCHOOL AS A SOCIAL INSTITUTION

**The School's Share of the Work of Rural Society.**—The rural school as an institution has a twofold significance, educational and social. Regarded purely as an institution of learning, the school is, with the exception of the farm home, the most universal rural institution, and if its rôle were never other than the education of rural children, it would still be one of the great social institutions of the open country. But to say that the education of children is the sole function of the rural school is not sufficient, for there still remains the consideration of what it should teach and what should be its highest purpose in rural life.

Three great tasks, each of them vital to rural people and to American society as a whole, are delegated to the rural school (1) to teach the rudiments and fundamentals of education, (2) to furnish to children the general elements of our common culture, and (3) to prepare children for entering institutions of higher learning.

The first task is not fulfilled by teaching merely the initial steps—rudiments—for the actual underlying principles—fundamentals—must also be taught. Reading, writing and arithmetic, so much and so justly criticized from one point of view, are, from another, the most fundamental subjects any elementary school can teach. Written and spoken language and numbers are the most universal tools of learning in the world, and he who can use none of them to some extent is handicapped indeed. They are the means by which a great proportion of our knowledge is acquired, and by which the ideas and experiences of other people and other generations are transmitted to any particular individual or generation. People did, of course, learn to talk and read and write and count before these subjects became a systematized part of instruction in educational institutions, but

the tragedy is that in this day of universal schools there are some individuals who cannot obtain training in them. In 1930, there were in this country 4,283,753 illiterate people over 10 years of age, or 4.3 per cent of the total population of this age group. The percentage of white illiteracy for this age group in the rural farm population was 3.4, and in the rural non-farm, 2.9; the percentage of Negro illiteracy for these same groups was 23.3 and 20.5, respectively, rising in some rural sections to as high as 25.0. In each of eight states—Louisiana, South Carolina, Mississippi, Alabama, New Mexico, Georgia, North Carolina, and Arizona—the percentage of rural illiterates over 10 years of age exceeded 16 per cent of the total population in that age group. The first task of the rural school, if adequately performed, will blot out this illiteracy.

The second task of the rural school is twofold: to teach people to make those adjustments to their environments and to other individuals which will give them the maximum satisfaction in life, and to prepare them for rural life. Abstract knowledge or learning, in the sense of education unrelated to life, does not exist, for all learning must relate itself in some way to life's experiences and adjustments. The whole function of education is to make these relationships real and practicable, and the best methods of teaching and learning are those which relate directly to everyday human experiences. Furthermore, these methods demand the utilization of the pupils' immediate environment which, in the case of the rural child, is the farm, and consequently, from the standpoint of either the teaching technique or human adjustments, these methods are most practicable if they are closely related to farm life. Thus people will be prepared for rural life. If training in the rural elementary school is inadequate in this respect, millions of those who are to live on farms and constitute our rural civilization will be compelled to do without this training, for less than 15 per cent of the children who enter elementary schools ever attend any higher institutions of learning.

The third task is that of preparing for high school. There is no reason why this task should in any way handicap or even modify the two just described, and every effort should be made to prevent this. Even when the day comes when one-half or more of the pupils in rural elementary schools go on to high schools, these primary schools should not relax their efforts to orient their



pupils to their local and world environment and to provide them with the working tools with which to adapt themselves to the day-by-day life which everyone in our modern society must lead.

A. S. Jensen, when a Teaching Fellow in the School of Education at the University of Washington, made an interesting and enlightening study of what he called "Rural Opinion of Educational Philosophy." He compiled, from writings on rural education and on other aspects of rural life, the various primary purposes of education set forth by the different writers, and he showed the results in rural life to which each of these purposes would lead. He found that there were five outstanding divisions, and he submitted questionnaires on their importance to farm people, rural educators, county agents and superintendents, farm organizations, and students. The following were set forth by Jensen as the emphases urged by these writers for rural education, and his conclusion as to the probable result is indicated in each case:

1. (a) *Emphasis.* To train farm boys and girls so that they will stay on the farm  
 (b) *Result.* The development of a distinct peasant class of rural people.
2. (a) *Emphasis.* To furnish training for vocational (agricultural) efficiency  
 (b) *Result.* Efficient producers of farm products
3. (a) *Emphasis.* To prepare for a more satisfying or richer rural life.  
 (b) *Result.* Efficient farmers who are happy and contented to live in the country
4. (a) *Emphasis.* To prepare for general efficiency and community service.  
 (b) *Result.* Efficient citizens of the community.
5. (a) *Emphasis.* Training for broad citizenship.  
 (b) *Result.* Efficient citizenship of society as a whole

"Broad citizenship" was given first place by almost 80 per cent of those who replied to the questionnaire, and the other four topics were classified as follows in the answers received: second, "community service"; third, "richer rural life"; fourth, "vocational efficiency"; and, last, "stay on the farm." Jensen concluded his study with the following terse remarks:

The rural people, who are more interested in the problem of elementary education in the rural schools than anyone else, most emphatically reject the idea of using the rural school as a means of keeping the children on the farm

The rural people reject also, with but little emphasis, the vocational efficiency, the richer rural life, and the community service theories as fundamental in the purposes of the rural school.

The rural people express their emphatic approval of the broadest possible theory—citizenship of society as a whole—as a fundamental only worthwhile purpose of the elementary education in the rural school

If the opinion of the rural people, as expressed in this study, is general throughout the country, and if such opinion may be accepted as sound educational philosophy, the approach to the solution of the problem of the rural school must be from the general social viewpoint, and not from any particularistic point of view as it has so often been in the past<sup>1</sup>

**The Rural School as a Community Institution.**—The rural school is a part of the rural community, not solely because of its location there, but because there is delegated to it the systematic education of rural boys and girls, because it provides the most systematic association between members of the community outside their own homes, and because it is usually the entire community's only public building and free public meeting place. Although the rural school is one of the most important rural institutions, it has not yet visioned its fullest function or developed fully its great opportunity as a community institution

The institutionalizing process automatically crystallizes our most habitual activities, sooner or later narrowing any institutional agency to a few categorical processes, and even though it continues to perform other functions, it is thought of primarily in terms of a few specific things. Thus the elementary school is thought of as an institution for the education of boys and girls between six and fifteen years of age, and the school life of these eight years is thought of—and too often actually practiced—only in terms of the course of study. The associations which are the pupils' dominant interests for eight or nine months of the year are allowed to lapse almost completely during the summer vacation, and the school building and school grounds, usually alive with

<sup>1</sup> Jensen, A. S., "Rural Opinion of Educational Philosophy," *The Journal of Rural Education*, November, 1925

the faces of happy children and teeming with associations, become dust-ridden and weed-grown for one-third of the year. Furthermore, the associations which have been continuous for eight years are usually almost entirely severed at the completion of the primary school. The movement for "the wider use of the school plant," chiefly as a part of the consolidated school movement, has only recently included the rural school.<sup>2</sup>

**The Rural School as a Teaching Agency.**—The problems of the rural school as a teaching agency center about the issues of who are taught, what and where they are taught, and how long and by whom. Someone has described the rural school as "a little school where little children for a little while are taught little things by a little teacher." This is true in a sense, for the schools are small, the children are young, the school year is often short and the number of years of schooling few, elementary subjects are taught, and the teacher is often not an educational expert. But the Fourth of July orator's praise of the "little red school house" is well deserved, for the rural school has performed a valuable service to rural people and to the nation. It was small at first because the rural inhabitants were few, transportation and communication facilities were few and poor, and the people were poor, but it was located within the reach of practically every rural child in the United States. The rural school has provided millions of people with the rudiments of an education, and the literacy rate is consequently a thousand times higher than it would otherwise have been. Throughout the period of our national existence the rural school has taken over half our population for a number of months and years during their life, and has done for them what no other agency or institution could have done.

The rural school is at fault, not because it does not teach much, many, and well, but because in some respects it is not alive to the modern trends in either education or agriculture. It is therefore not in disparagement of the rural school of the past, but in appreciation of its great tasks and opportunities in the future,

<sup>2</sup> See Preston, Mrs. J. C., "The Wider Use of the School Plant," *Bulletin No. 34*, State Department of Education of Washington, Olympia, 1919; Glueck, E. T., "Extended Use of School Buildings," *Bulletin No. 5*, Department of the Interior, Bureau of Education, 1927; and Hayes, A. W., "The Community Value of the Consolidated Rural School," *Research Bulletin No. 2*, Tulane University, New Orleans, 1923.

that we analyze the rural school of the present and discuss its salient weaknesses.

### THE PROGRAM OF THE RURAL SCHOOL

An institution is almost certainly representative of the best thought and experiences of the past, but seldom, if ever, of those of the present. It cannot represent the best current thought on any subject, for that thought must become fairly widespread in the minds of the people as a whole before it can be translated into an institutional program. This should be less true of educational institutions than of any other type, for the very issues of education are progressive. The greater the isolation of an institution from the stream of events which constitute progress, the greater will its program lag behind the best thought and methods of the present. Since the rural school is an institution which, until recently, has been comparatively isolated, its program consequently has lagged.

**The Curriculum.**—Just as the rural school is an institution, so is it constituted largely of a set of institutionalized courses of study. It first taught those subjects which were thought necessary in the past—reading, writing, spelling and arithmetic. Geography was soon added to its curriculum and, shortly afterward, history and physiology, and for half a century these seven subjects constituted its entire curriculum. Teachers taught and children studied these subjects from three to eight months a year over a period of from six to eight years, entirely oblivious of the great world of nature and the numerous other people around them.

The methods of teaching were those of formal discipline, and the technique of learning was memorizing by rote. Progress was measured by mileposts in specific textbooks, like Ray's *Third Part of Arithmetic*, or by going from one book to another—from the Third to the Fourth Reader. The rigid discipline of the school was in perfect harmony with the rigidity of the curriculum. The child's mind was not developed, it was stuffed; his interest was not stimulated, it was driven, and his individuality and personality were not developed, they were crushed and catalogued. The farm boy's eagerness to leave school, with the drudgery of farm work the only other alternative, has probably been due more to the forbidding nature of this educational method and its stultifying effects on his natural instincts, than to any other one thing.

Even with the advent of better facilities of communication, and when county or state supervision had pointed to the need of a change in the curriculum, the changes made bore no direct relation to rural life. In the city schools, experiments were being made and progress was being achieved, there were new courses, and new textbooks were written by city educators. It was in this direction that the expansion of the rural school curriculum tended, largely because rural parents and citizens were not concerned with educational problems, rural school teachers were usually third-rate, and the rural child was never asked for an opinion. Reading, arithmetic, and manual training, in particular, reflected this urban influence.

Recently, however, the function and needs of the rural school have been recognized more fully and its curriculum is accordingly providing for some adaptation to rural life, methods of teaching are being evolved which utilize the native rural environment and prepare the child for life on the farm and in the open country. The "activity program," so called, which is being tried out rather extensively in some city school systems, and to a lesser extent in rural schools, is far more than a program of activity; it is a system and a philosophy of education.<sup>8</sup>

**Recitations.**—Teaching by recitations, which was the practice until recently—and still is in the one-room school—is little short of a farce, and yet, in a period from six to twenty minutes long, it is impossible to do more than quiz pupils on facts learned from textbooks. The rural school often has only one teacher, and in some cases only one room in which pupils of all ages have to be taught. The period of schooling is short, and many new courses have been added to the curriculum without eliminating or modifying the old ones. The result is that there are about thirty recitations daily in the average rural school, and in some extreme cases teachers are trying to conduct forty-five each day. What the rural school has accomplished in five- and ten-minute recitation periods is little short of miraculous; but how much it could have accomplished had the teacher not been overburdened, and had she been able to teach by demonstration during the class period

<sup>8</sup> See Kirkpatrick, A. M., "The Project Method," *Teachers College Record*, Columbia University, New York, September, 1918, vol. XIX, pp. 319-335, and Smith, E. E., *The Heart of the Curriculum*, Doubleday, Doran and Company, Inc., New York, 1924.

and to guide each pupil's desk work and all-day activity, is impossible to imagine.

The weakness in this recitation system is not, however, due entirely to a crowded curriculum; it is partly due to poor teaching technique, to poor teachers, and, in particular, to a lack of appreciation of the interests of the rural child. As has already been said, the children in a school range from six to eighteen years of age, and all school work is often carried on in one room. The school equipment is so meager that no charts, globes, sandpiles, etc., are provided. The rural school is seldom taught by a person who has dedicated his or her life to that profession,<sup>4</sup> often the teacher does not live in the community and her major interests therefore are elsewhere. Frequently the one teacher is forced to be an expert in as many as eight different school grades, and there is often no supervision of the teaching.

**The Leisure-time Program.**—All that has been said about the crowded curriculum of the rural school indicates that there is little or no time for leisure or recreational programs; and this condition will continue as long as the recitations are innumerable and study is conducted as a formal discipline. It will continue, to altogether too great a degree, wherever the school has only one room and one teacher.

The leisure-time program in the old-fashioned country school generally consisted of haphazard games and "gossipy" conversations carried on by small groups during a one-hour "noon recess" and two "fifteen-minute recesses," one in mid morning and the other, for the smaller children, in the middle of the afternoon. The children were completely unsupervised during these play periods, since the teacher was busy in the school house with other classes. The children were usually not permitted to arrive in the morning much before time "for school to take up," and they were forbidden by both parents and teachers, and sometimes by the school board, to loiter on the grounds after "school let out" in the afternoon. If the teacher took any part at all in the children's play, it was because he or she liked to play, liked little children enough to enjoy their pleasures, wanted fresh air and exercise, or wished to maintain discipline. The teacher who tried to use a play program and play projects as part of the regular school program was

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<sup>4</sup> Focht, H. W., "Efficiency and Preparation of Rural School Teachers," *Bulletin No. 49*, United States Bureau of Education, 1914.

indeed exceptional. Furthermore, rural parents would have objected to any such program, for education to them was a serious and routine task, and anyway children "got all the exercise they needed at home."

Singing is another means of pleasure and improvement which was totally lacking in the rural school, but which today, although still too much neglected, is recognized as a legitimate and valuable part of the school program. The old-fashioned church was a singing church; the old-fashioned country community was often a singing community, but the old-fashioned rural school was devoid of songs, much less music. Even the "last day" and "exhibition" programs offered very little music. Nor was story telling on any rural school program. Although children began school at five years of age, or younger, they were neither entertained nor taught by story telling, but started at once their "A B C's" and "numbers."

An exceptional teacher would occasionally introduce one or all of these entertainment elements. Sometimes an Arbor Day was set aside for planting trees in the school ground, or an attempt was made to interest the children in some other aspect of ground improvement. All such efforts, however, were never a part of an established and prescribed school program, but were due solely to the genius of such a teacher.<sup>5</sup> These teachers were the fore-runners of the new rural school, but the day of this new rural school has by no means universally arrived in the life and progress of the rural school.

Until very recently, the rural school has had nothing which could be correctly described as an extension or community program. Its task was accepted as complete with the administration, within its four walls, of from thirty to forty doses of categorical recitations every day for five days each week and never more than for thirty-two weeks of the year. The school program was not concerned with the remainder of the child's time. Parent-teacher associations today are doing much to enlarge the school's community program, although their work has not attained in rural districts the perfection that it has in urban areas. There have been other changes in this situation, and these will be discussed briefly in Chapter XVII.

<sup>5</sup> See Carney, Mabel, *Country Life and the Country School*, Row, Peterson and Company, Chicago, 1912.

THE TROUBLE WITH THE RURAL SCHOOL<sup>6</sup>

**Its Failure to Meet the Test of Modern Education.**—Regardless of the tendency of institutions to lag behind the best thinking of their time, there is no excuse for an institution clinging to an old program if a new and better one has been thoroughly tested and proved. The established criteria of modern education cannot be met by a primary school that still has a dozen distinct types of courses in its curriculum, that devotes over 75 per cent of the school day to recitations, that depends upon formal discipline and memorizing by rote for its teaching methods, and that fails to utilize the child's immediate environment and natural interests in differentiating its training. In most cases, the one-room, one-teacher rural school is almost forced to violate every one of these criteria.

**Its Failure to Meet the Needs of Modern Farm Life.**—The rural school is gradually introducing into its curriculum courses in agriculture, nature study and the domestic sciences, and a number of states make these and similar subjects a part of their prescribed courses of study. However, such courses are still unoffered in thousands of rural schools, and millions of rural children are going through or leaving these schools with no realization of the direct relation of their school learning to their home life. Civics, which is a recent addition to the rural school curriculum in some states, is seldom ever "community civics," much less "rural community civics."

**Its Small Size.**—The problem of rural school education is too important to depend for its solution on a local district, one-room, one-teacher, unit, or school, system. There are still approximately 200,000 one- and two-room schools in the United States, which are often located in small districts which attempt to support their own school work. The buildings are relics of pioneer days, the grounds are small and almost always poorly kept; there are few pupils, and the work, in spite of the most persistent efforts to the contrary, is poorly graded. Cubberley lists the following points as the chief objections to the district system of school organiza-

<sup>6</sup> There is practically no limit to the amount of space that could be given to the subjects discussed in this section, but because they are more properly the subject matter for courses in education, they are treated here only as a background for social interpretation.



tion, and these constitute an intelligent criticism of the small school wherever it exists.

1. It is no longer so well adapted to meet present conditions and needs as are other systems of larger scope.

2. The district authorities only seldom see the real needs of their schools or the possibilities of rural education.

3. As a system of school administration it is expensive, short-sighted, inefficient, inconsistent, and unprogressive

4. It leads to great and unnecessary inequalities in schools, terms, educational advantages, and to unwise multiplication of schools.

5. The taxing unit is too small and the trustees too penurious.

6. The trustees, because they hold the purse strings, frequently assume authority over many matters which they are not competent to manage.

7. Most of the progress in rural school improvement has been made without the support, and often against the opposition, of the trustees and of the people they represent.<sup>7</sup>

**Its Poor Support and Meager Equipment.**—The day has passed when oak benches, hickory switches, and blue-backed spellers alone constituted adequate school equipment, when a stern disciplinarian and crack arithmetician was the ideal of a good teacher. In the present day of the market and price regime, of newspapers and magazines, and of scientific farming and community organization, adequate equipment and trained teachers are necessary if rural education is to be efficient.

The basic need for the rural school is adequate financial support. Rural schools are now supported by a little over one-half the cost per child in city schools. The tax rate in the country is generally about one-half of the urban rate, and the investment in school property in the country is one-third or one-half less than the urban. The average annual salary of the rural teacher is about one-half that of the city teacher. The rural school buildings are small, and the ventilation, heat and lighting are poor, the schools lack a sufficient number of blackboards, charts, maps, globes, pictures, and also adequate library equipment. These shortcomings can never be corrected until the necessary funds are available to

<sup>7</sup> Cubberley, E. P., *Rural Life and Education*, Houghton Mifflin Company, New York, 1914, pp 184-185

support the school adequately and to purchase the equipment needed.

As long as the small-district rural school system continues, there will be gross inequalities not only in urban and rural educational opportunities but also in rural educational opportunities themselves in the different sections of the country. Eliff, who was a school inspector in Missouri for years, used to say, "The carefully guarded 'right' of the local district is the right to have the poorest school possible." Conditions have improved to a marked degree since the statistics in Table 81 were compiled, but these figures will serve to show the variation between urban and rural

TABLE 81—COMPARISON OF SCHOOL ADVANTAGES IN COUNTRY AND CITY IN THE UNITED STATES<sup>a</sup>

	School Term in Days	School Prop- erty per Pupil Enrolled	School Ex- penditures per Pupil Enrolled	Average Annual Salary of Teachers
City	182	\$146 69	\$40 59	\$854
Country	143	60 81	23 91	479

school advantages only a little more than a decade ago. The provision of equalization funds, of standard certification for teachers, and of rural school supervision has accomplished much in improving these conditions and is destined to accomplish even more.<sup>b</sup>

**Its Poor Attendance.**—The excessive illiteracy of our rural population is accounted for in no small way by the fact that the average attendance in rural schools generally falls below that of city schools. This relatively low attendance is due to the fact that (1) the rural school and its program neither invite nor challenge the rural child, (2) compulsory attendance laws are often modified to cover more absences in rural schools; (3) farmers keep their children home to work, (4) weather and roads are bad, and there is often no means of transportation, and (5) there are fewer truant officers in rural districts.

<sup>a</sup> *Bulletin No. 90*, Department of the Interior, Bureau of Education, Washington, D. C., 1919, pp. 29, 31, 34.

<sup>b</sup> See Cook, Katherine N., *Bulletin No. 15*, Department of the Interior, Bureau of Education, Government Printing Office, Washington, D. C., 1927.

## 382 THE PROBLEM OF THE RURAL SCHOOL

The data on school attendance in Table 82 are the latest ones available which cover the country as a whole, but we do have statistics for 1925-1926 which show that every state with more

TABLE 82 —SCHOOL ATTENDANCE IN CITY AND COUNTRY<sup>10</sup>

	Number of Pupils Enrolled	Average Daily Attendance	Per Cent of Enrolled Pupils in Average Daily Attendance	Number of States with Higher Rate of Attendance
City	8,586,601	6,760,314	78.4	35
Country	12,280,530	8,674,451	70.6	13

than 25 per cent "of school term not attended" is a rural state. These figures, in per cent, are as follows:

Alabama	29.4	Mississippi	27.4
Arkansas	29.6	North Carolina	26.0
Florida	26.9	Oklahoma	31.5
Georgia	25.6	South Carolina	28.5
Kentucky	33.7	Tennessee	30.7

All these states are in the south, and the low attendance of Negro children increases the rate of non-attendance. But every one of the twenty states in which the non-attendance rate for 1925-1926 exceeded that for continental United States was rural, unless California is classified as not rural.<sup>11</sup>

The census of 1930 listed six states with less than 91 per cent of the children from 7 to 13 years of age in school, and these are likewise rural states. The only two divisions of the country with this low percentage are the East South Central and the West South Central, with 90.6 and 90.3 per cent, respectively, the south has a percentage of 90.8.<sup>12</sup> The percentage of the population from 5 to 20 years of age in school was: total national, 69.9, urban, 72.8; rural non-farm (village), 69.3; and rural farm, 66.4.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>10</sup> *Biennial Survey of Education in the United States, 1920-1922*, Department of the Interior, Bureau of Education, Washington, D. C.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, 1924-1926, p. 605.

<sup>12</sup> *Fifteenth Census*, Population Bulletin, Second Series, United States Summary, Washington, D. C., 1931, Table 50.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, Table 23.

**Shortness of the School Year and Few Years of Schooling.**—In 1918, the average length of the rural school year was 143 days, as against 182 days for the urban.<sup>14</sup> In 1927-1928, the elementary schools in twenty states were in session less than 170 days—Alabama, Arizona, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, Nevada, North Carolina, North Dakota, Oklahoma, South Carolina, South Dakota, Tennessee, Texas, Utah, Virginia, and West Virginia, all of them predominantly rural.<sup>15</sup> Hundreds of rural schools are in session only six months or less each year, and in a number of states rural schools provide only 7 grades of instruction. A survey of the 300 freshmen in North Carolina State College of Agriculture and Engineering in 1921 showed an average previous school attendance of 77 months; over one-third of the country boys had attended school no more than 64 months—*i e.*, only 8 years of schooling for 8 months each year, or about 7 years for 9 months each year.

No rural high schools have existed until recently, and consequently the rural child, if he has had a high school training, has had to go to the city for it.

TABLE 83—TEACHERS IN ONE- AND TWO-ROOM SCHOOLS IN THE UNITED STATES IN 1918<sup>16</sup>

		Per Cent
Number	300,000	
Not yet completed high school	150,000	50 0
Finished only grade school	30,000	10 0
No professional training	100,000	33 3
Normal school graduates	6,000	2 0
Special rural training	300	0 1
Number who leave the field annually	90,000	30 0
Remain not more than one year in a place	200,000	66 6

**Its Poor Instruction.**—The instruction in the rural school is poorer than that in the urban school, because:

1 Rural teachers have to instruct in from 10 to 15 subjects and to conduct from 30 to 40 recitations each day.

<sup>14</sup> *Biennial Survey, 1924-1926*, p. 582

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, 1926-1928, p. 461

<sup>16</sup> Department of Interior, *Bulletin No. 90*, Bureau of Education, Washington, D. C., 1919.

## 384 THE PROBLEM OF THE RURAL SCHOOL

2. Rural teachers are inexperienced and badly trained
3. Rural teachers are poorly paid, and as a result\*the city attracts the better teachers.
4. Rural teachers lack adequate teaching equipment
5. Good instruction is impossible unless the subject matter is of interest to the pupil, and little of the rural school curriculum offers this interest to the rural child

Table 83 presents pertinent information on the training and permanency of rural school teachers

**Its Poor Supervision and Administration.**—Educational supervision and administration have become professions, and expert overhead supervision is just as necessary for the efficiency and adequacy of a school as for a city, a factory, or an army Under a local district system, there will be 30,000 rural school units in a state the size of Iowa, with a total average enrollment of about 300,000 children. If all the subjects taught in these schools each day were totaled, they would amount to between 350,000 and 400,000, and about 1,000,000 recitations would be heard each day Needless to say, such a tremendous undertaking demands the best administration and supervision for its success

Rural school administration and supervision is weak in the following respects

1. The local district or township school board has neither the training nor the time to administer rural education
2. The county superintendent too often holds his office as the result of election by popular vote rather than because of his training as an educator
3. There are no standard criteria for the rural school regarding courses of study, teacher training or school administration
4. There is little supervision of health, sanitation, or other extra-curricular factors
5. There is too often no state course of study, state school inspection and state supervision

It is neither necessary nor desirable to discuss these weaknesses in detail, and the various experiments now being made in this connection in individual states, for the slightest observation of rural schools, and their comparison with city schools, will show how far the rural school falls below the urban in administration and supervision.

## ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL CAUSES OF POOR RURAL SCHOOLS

**Tenancy.**—Rural school opportunities vary widely in different districts because the unit of school support and administration is so often local. But wherever there are very distinct tenure classes, such as tenants, educational opportunities are unequal, regardless of the unit of administration and support. The schools in a tenant community do not receive adequate support from either the tenant operators or the absentee owners. The educational status of the tenants themselves is usually lower, and consequently their educational ideals are lower; moreover, they are unable to give their children the same educational advantages that the owners can. Tenant children are often kept out of school because of the lack of books or clothes, because they are needed for work at home, or because their family is moving from one place to another. If any of the weaknesses of the rural school discussed in the preceding section are found to depend on the children, the community, the building, or the support, they will be found to be greatly magnified in tenant communities.

School efficiency is jeopardized even more by hired men and croppers than by tenants. For example, the illiteracy rate of the tenants in the southeast Missouri community study referred to previously was twice as high as that of the owner operators, and that of the croppers and hired men was over four times as high as that of the owner operators, and, in this community, tenants, croppers and hired men constituted over nine-tenths of the total population. This study<sup>17</sup> also showed that 59.3 per cent of the croppers, 38.9 per cent of the hired men, and 27.6 per cent of the tenants had dropped out of school before, or on, the completion of the fourth grade, as against 14.5 per cent of the owner operators. Not one cropper or hired man in this whole section held a school office, and 53 per cent each of the hired men and croppers and 26 per cent of the tenants either were opposed to specific school improvements or showed no interest when questioned, as against 17 per cent of the owner operators. Not one owner in this community kept his children out of school to work for hire, but 25 per cent of the tenants, 66 per cent of the croppers, and 78.6

<sup>17</sup> Taylor, Carl C., Yoder, F. R., and Zimmerman, C. C., *op. cit.*

per cent of the hired men followed this practice. All school buildings were in a condition of disrepair.<sup>18</sup>

The families of tenants, croppers, and hired men fail to give adequate school support and to have consistent school habits; and, since they are transients in the community, it is only natural that they should feel no very deep interest in the school as a community institution. The landlord is often worse than the tenant in this respect, for he is a non-resident. In his report, "A Study of Rural Schools in Travis County, Texas," E. E. Davis says.

Diligent inquiry was made, and in this area of 200 square miles and more than 13,000 population, only one absentee landlord was reported as actively encouraging his tenants to vote for a school tax.

You want to know what makes our school one of the sorriest in Travis County? I can tell you in about fifteen words. This community is owned and controlled by about three men who do not live here.<sup>19</sup>

Table 84, compiled from another study made in Texas, gives further information regarding the influence of tenancy upon education.

TABLE 84.—THE INFLUENCE OF TENANCY UPON EDUCATION<sup>20</sup>

	Per Cent of Farms Operated by Tenants	School Property per Child	Average Length of School Term in Days	Per Cent of Dis- tricts Levying Local Taxes	Per Cent of En- rollment to Scho- lastic Enumera- tion	Per Cent of Average Daily Attend- ance to School Enumera- tion
Average for about eleven low-tenancy counties	30	32 55	135	75	89	52
Average for about fifteen high-tenancy counties	63	13 76	117	64	81	47

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>19</sup> Davis, E. E., "A Study of Rural Schools in Travis County, Texas," *Bulletin No. 67*, University of Texas, Austin, 1916, p. 7

<sup>20</sup> White, E. V., "Studies in Farm Tenantry in Texas," *Bulletin No. 21*, University of Texas, Austin, p. 41

**Poor Farming and Low Farm Income.**—Poor farming, particularly if the soil has been depleted of its native fertility, automatically results in low income. It is easy to show that one-crop areas and sections with little livestock, low land values and low farm incomes are below the average in rural educational advantages, for the relation between these economic factors and rural educational opportunities is self-evident. School and school programs cost money, and such sections are low in purchasing power. South Carolina, Mississippi, Alabama, and the other states whose rank has been consistently low on the basis of these economic factors, have also been low in rural educational advantages. The influence of these economic factors is greatly intensified when the poverty of a single local district is allowed to control completely the educational appropriation for that district.

**Isolation.**—Isolation is the one remaining excuse for the small-district, one-room, one-teacher school—the poorest kind of rural school existing. Isolation is a handicap to the rural school because large schools are impossible, roads are generally bad, teachers hesitate to go so far away from urban conveniences and associations, and supervision is difficult. Sparsely settled states, such as Arizona, Nevada, New Mexico, Wyoming, and Montana, rank low, particularly in daily attendance, and in some isolated mountain and dry-farming sections the school is open only during the summer months.

**Negro Education.**—The rapid improvement in Negro education during the past decade has been due to a number of causes, the first of which is probably our natural humanitarian sentiments. A number of endowed institutions, such as the Slater, Jeanes, and Rosenwald Funds, have led in this work. Southern people now realize clearly the impossibility of raising the general level of their own economic life without a corresponding rise in the Negro standard of living. Since it is chiefly through a program of education that they are approaching this task, consequently all of the southern states are much more active in their efforts for the promotion and development of Negro education than they were two decades ago.

The differences between the educational status and opportunities of the white and Negro races are, nevertheless, still very great. The data in Table 85 compare white and Negro education in the south; since these two races do not have separate schools in the northern states, there are no data for the north.



TABLE 85—SHOWING COMPARATIVE DATA

State	Alabama		Florida		Georgia	
Races (white and colored)	White	Colored	White	Colored	White	Colored
Per cent of total scholastic population	61 79	38 21	68 19	31 81	58 22	41 78
Per cent of total school enrollment	63 30	36 70	72 86	27 14		
Length of school term (in days)	143	112	148	108		
Per cent of total amount paid teachers	79 73	12 11	91 58	8 42	90 65	9 35
Per cent of total school property	90 73	9 27	93 97	6 03	89 10	10 90
Per cent of total expended for equipment	92 65	7 35	97 94	206	94 79	5 21
Per cent of total amount of current expenditures	89 41	10 59				
Number of accredited high schools		309	1		264	11
Per cent of total amount expended for higher education					96 23	3 77

However, the differences between these two races in educational facilities, particularly in school practices, are even greater than is indicated by the table. Negro schools are much less frequently consolidated than white schools, and the training and salaries of Negro teachers are always poorer. School attendance is much poorer in the case of the Negro children than the white, mainly for two reasons: (1) Negro children are kept away from school more frequently to help with farm and other work, and (2) the attendance law is not enforced as rigidly for Negroes.

Considerably over one-half of the accredited Negro high schools receive no support from taxes, of the eleven such high schools in Georgia, for example, only one is supported by taxes. In North Carolina, which leads all the southern states in educational opportunities for the colored portion of her population, there are twenty accredited Negro high schools supported by the state, and twenty-three which are supported by endowment funds.

Educational opportunities for Negroes diminish in number and scope in the case of the higher institutions of learning, for practically all such institutions are either agricultural or teacher-training schools.

#### QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. What is the function of the grade school in rural life?
2. Should agriculture be a compulsory course in all rural grade schools?
3. What do you think of the proud boasts about the "little red school house" and its accomplishments?

# THE PROBLEM OF THE RURAL SCHOOL 389

## OF WHITE AND NEGRO EDUCATION\*

Louisiana		North Carolina		Oklahoma		South Carolina		Tennessee		Texas	
White	Colored	White	Colored	White	Colored	White	Colored	White	Colored	White	Colored
56 31	43 69	68 36	31 64	92 63	7 27	51 11	48 89	82 17	17 73	82 71	17 29
66 52	33 48	68 52	31 48	92 48	7 52	51 19	48 81	81 74	18 26	82 35	17 65
171	113	146 2	134 8			167	114				
89 09	10 91	88 96	11 04	95 22	4 78	86 88	13 12				
94 75	5 25	87 97	12 03			89 11	10 89	93 44	6 56	94 97	5 03
		93 63	6 37	95 39	4 61	88 69	11 31				
						89 97	11 03				
294	4	446	43			276	16	258	10	579	1
90 44	9 56	93 12	6 88	98 51	1 49			..			

the facts for both white and Negro statistics in a given state. The state educational reports are not filled

4. What is meant by the statement, "The rural teacher should be 'rural minded' "?
5. Do you think the rural school is actually as weak as this chapter would make it appear?
6. Do you think it is necessary for everyone to go to high school?
7. How can all rural children be guaranteed equal school opportunities?
8. Is it fair to tax white people for the support of Negro schools?
9. What steps would you take to insure equal educational opportunities for every boy and girl—urban and rural, white and colored?

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## CHAPTER XVII

### AN ADEQUATE RURAL EDUCATION PROGRAM

#### MORE AND BETTER FUNCTIONS FOR RURAL SCHOOLS

**Education Must Be Recognized as the Chief Means of Social Adjustment and Progress.**—A person is never completely educated. Every step in the learning process furnishes him with additional tools and techniques with which to take the next step, and each succeeding step demands new adjustments and involves further learning. Education is real only to the extent that it creates the desire and capacity for further mental growth. The school's chief function is to teach people progressively to discover the world in all its aspects, to see themselves as a part of it, and to live in it abundantly by adapting themselves to and using it.

The school as an institution, even more than the home, is capable of progressive adaptation to the changing life of the world. Largely because of custom, family life and practices continue to be astonishingly uniform from generation to generation, each new one imbibing its thoughts and picking up its customs from its observations of the previous one. In the school there is a conscious and systematic revision of subject matter based upon new ideas and discoveries. Modifications in living are made mainly through learning new and better ways of doing things, and as a result education becomes our most important agency of progress. The progress of the past has not come so much through the development of a better racial stock—although much has been learned about the protection and preservation of life—as through learning more about our physical and social world and its use as a means of attaining human happiness and welfare.

We have sufficient knowledge of the psychology of learning and the origin of impulse and interest, and sufficient evidence that the rural school will for a long time to come have a monopoly on the formal education of the majority of rural people, to know that unless it teaches them to make adjustments to farm life and to

utilize farm information efficiently, it is not really educating to any great extent. Agriculture is and will continue to be the one dominant activity in rural life, and rural people find that every element in their standard of living depends on or is conditioned by it. If the studies in the rural school curricula do not directly attach themselves to life and work on the farm, children will try to escape either education, by leaving school, or the farm, by going to towns or cities. Moreover, it is unnecessary to sacrifice the more universal values of any subject in the rural school curriculum because it is approached from the point of view of the child's knowledge of and interest in agriculture.

The rural school curriculum that fails to enlarge the environment of rural boys and girls is failing to perform its duty to both the nation and the world. Every school should teach its students to adjust themselves progressively to the changing circumstances of an ever enlarging world life, and the rural school can do this if its curriculum is adjusted with the idea of the occupation of agriculture at one end, and of the world environment at the other.

**Rural Schools Must Relate Themselves to Other Factors and Conditions of Rural Life.**—Because schools are universal and the assembly place of great numbers of children, it is easy to believe, fallaciously, that they are capable of functions which, in reality, they are unable to perform. Indeed, it is highly questionable whether the elementary schools can do many of the things held by some school men to be their primary functions. Schools are neither our most dominant nor our most universal educational forces, and their control over the child is neither as complete nor as subtle as that of the home. Children are under the direct control of schools less than half of their waking hours and less than half of their days from birth to the age of fourteen. A child's personality is not molded as much in the school as in the home, for it is in the home that he forms his early habits and learns his early attitudes, even after he has entered school he returns to his home each day. If mornings, evenings, Saturdays, Sundays and vacation periods are taken into account, it is readily seen that, during the child's early life, the home remains the most formative agency in his life.

The school, nevertheless, will continue to be one of our major social institutions. A division of labor between the vital social functions is the basis upon which the social institutions operate.

Each institution arises as the result of a need, and it operates in the midst of forces, interests, and agencies among which it divides the entire field of social functions. Consequently one major institution can never be a satisfactory substitute for another. The school can never function adequately in the complete program of rural education until it relates itself, in the most intelligent way, to the rural community as a whole. People in rural communities are dominated by the thoughts, purposes, and plans of farming, and most of them live in individual, self-contained families. An appreciation of these facts is of the utmost importance in understanding what the rural school can and should be. The school will never supersede these primary interests in the general social atmosphere of the farm home and community. It must and should utilize and supplement these interests; that is, it must capitalize them in its teaching technique and supplement the lives of its pupils by introducing other interests into this supersaturated rural atmosphere.

**Rural Schools Must Supply to the Rural Child's Mind What the Rural Environment Lacks.**<sup>1</sup>—Before trade and commerce developed, people knew fairly intimately their total environment and everyone with whom they had anything to do; but today our total environment is limited only by the ends of the earth, and we are influenced by forces and people we cannot possibly know personally, consequently, unless there is some sure way of keeping constantly in touch with the affairs of the world community, we shall be seriously handicapped. Therefore schools are a necessity in a civilization or society so complex that these many forces which influence our daily life cannot be personally experienced by each one of us. As we have already said, the function of the school is to make available for each new generation the accumulated experience of past generations and to put it in touch with the world of its own day. The home can and will continue to start each new generation in life; and, together with the neighborhood and the various occupations, it could perform the complete task of education in a simple homogeneous society. But the school—and the rural school in particular—must take the next long step by supplying the knowledge and tools needed for the

<sup>1</sup> Brim, O. G., *Rural Education*, The Macmillan Company, New York, 1923, pp. 197 ff.

adjustments to that larger life and field of activities which lie outside the experience of farm family life.

**The School Curriculum Should Educate for Life and Living.**—The child comes to school knowing little, if anything, except the day-by-day routine of his life. The institutionalization of education—that is, its centralization in schools and its crystallization into the subjects in the curriculum—has tended to detach much of the teaching from the immediate processes of living. If the schools fail to relate themselves to life as it is lived, they will fail to be our most important educational agencies, even though a considerable part of the child's early life is spent in them. People learn by doing, and their stimulus to learn is their desire to carry on life's activities more successfully, therefore they will be interested in and directed by those things which they can recognize most readily as related to their own world of affairs. If the school fails to relate its curriculum and activities to their own world, then the institutions which do this will dominate and direct their energies and interests and will automatically become society's most important educational forces.

Nothing can be gained by making education abstract, for general or cultural education unrelated to life's activities is not education, nor is it psychologically possible. The student may be forced to memorize the content of abstract subjects, but he will never assimilate it into his habits or personality and it will therefore have no influence on his conduct or attitudes or reflect itself in any worth-while activity. Furthermore, it is unnecessary to teach in abstractions in order to put the student in contact with, and make him aware of, the forces and influences of the larger world of which he is a part and which have a rôle in his own life. All education must be recognized as general and cultural if its relationship to life's activities is made clear. To say that, because they are concerned with the life of the past, science, or even the so-called humanities or classics, must be reduced to abstractions is fallacious, and to thus reduce them robs them of their richness and of the part they should perform in educating the student for life in a world environment. The only education that can be cultural in a dynamic sense is the study of cultures and civilizations—their institutions, their customs, their literature, and their life.

The aversion to abstract education sometimes leads to the overemphasis of training in trades and occupations, and this likewise

robs education of its broader function. No small part of a student's education is devoted to learning to perform a definite share of society's labor; but it is tragic if learning the techniques and technologies of a trade or occupation deprives him of the training connected with human relationships and fails to give him an appreciation and understanding of the world, past and present. One can be trained for a trade or profession so well—or at least so narrowly—that he will be handicapped in his actual civic life.

Some of the elements in the course of study in the elementary schools are particularly well adapted to training for citizenship in our modern world. For example, the "three R's," which are sometimes unduly criticized, are absolutely fundamental for participation in a society larger than a local neighborhood. They are the vehicles of communication between people who are not in face-to-face contact, and their use is essential in communicating with anyone outside of our immediate physical environment. If for some reason it were necessary to reduce the elementary school course of study to three subjects only, reading, writing and arithmetic should undoubtedly be the three.

Geography, history and science are probably the group next in importance. If properly taught, geography introduces the child to the physical world in which he lives, and history teaches him about the people who have lived in it. Thus through these two subjects his eyes are opened to the world beyond his own community, and he becomes aware of the fact that the life of his own community is thoroughly interwoven with that of society at large. Just as geography and history introduce him to a larger physical and cultural environment, so science introduces him to the laws of the physical and organic world, thereby contrasting the vastness of nature with the minuteness of the purely local and incidental factors of living. Therefore science, in the form of nature study, should be a part of the curriculum from the first year on, progressively enlarging its scope and interpretation all through the school training.

The next group in importance should be the social sciences—economics, sociology, political science, and social ethics. They need not be called by these titles, which are names of college courses, nor should they be taught abstractly, as is so often the case in our higher institutions of learning; but they can be introduced into the curriculum as early as are history and geography. Even when

a child first comes to school, he knows more about the civic and social factors of life than about any other organized body of knowledge or set of processes which are part of his school curriculum. By the time he starts the study of the social sciences, he has been in contact with and participated in the living activities of his family, of the neighborhood and the school, he has seen the buying and selling of economic goods, and has probably done some trading himself, he has seen the operation of government on all sides, and has participated in social life from hundreds of different angles. A course in citizenship (the social sciences) should be a part of every school curriculum, and should include a description and analysis of *all* civic relationships, world wide as well as purely local.

**The Schools Must Add New Subjects.**—Cubberley relates the following incident in discussing the need for a revised rural school curriculum.

One of our distinguished American scientists, now the chancellor of one of our large universities, once told the writer that in one of the first institute talks he ever gave he pointed out to the teachers present the great overemphasis of grammar in our public school work, and the desirability of reducing the time then given to this subject. At the close of the address a school principal came forward and wrung his hand, saying that he agreed with him thoroughly, and had for years been advocating such a reduction, in order that more time might be secured for work in arithmetic. The writer once had a similar experience, except that the subjects involved were exactly reversed.<sup>2</sup>

For altogether too long a time, teachers, educators and patrons have assumed that the efficiency of successful schools depends on the inclusion of the traditional subjects of the old-fashioned curriculum, but this is not the case. The destiny of the rural schools hinges upon the introduction of subjects more directly related to adjustments to farm life and work; for modern conditions of life, the demands now made upon agriculture, and the increasingly urgent needs of rural communities necessitate a school which offers more than the "three R's" and a few supplements to them.

The modern rural school curriculum should include courses on nature study, agriculture, domestic science, manual arts, health, civics, music, physical training, and organized play. It seems

<sup>2</sup> Cubberley, E. P., *op cit*, p. 256



rather inconsistent that some of these courses were first introduced into city schools and were taught there for some time before they were put into rural schools—nature study, for example, which is almost wholly concerned with plant, animal, and bird life. Domestic science has been taught to city girls who for the most part will never face the enormous responsibilities and the detailed duties of household management which confront farm girls. City boys, many of whom will never have any great need for skill in manual arts, have been given courses in manual training, while country boys, most of whom will need this skill the rest of their lives, have been compelled to spend their school hours studying subjects like formal and traditional grammar or spelling, for instance. The rural boy and girl, with no contact with the city's public and commercial facilities for music and recreation, have been the last to be taught music and recreation. The rural school needs to wake up to the fact that there are new ideas in education and that the city school, which has stolen its birthright in some of its innovations, cannot point the way to a thoroughly adequate rural curriculum.

The discussion regarding new courses for the country school curriculum has centered about agriculture, for to "vocalionalize," "vitalize," or "make practical" the country school has apparently always meant the introduction in the curriculum of the study of this one dominant practical phase of farm existence, and to this there have been the following three great obstacles

- 1 It was argued that farmers have no faith in the "book learning" and the grade teaching of agriculture. Even if it could be learned from books, a girl teacher could not teach it, furthermore, they have wanted their children to study the things they would not ordinarily learn at home.

- 2 It was argued that a child as young as those in the grades could not study agriculture because it presupposes too much technical scientific knowledge.

- 3 It was argued that the curriculum was already overcrowded and that there was no time left for new subjects.

All these arguments have been met to a degree, and they will be completely overcome in the future. The farmers themselves have been learning from agricultural journals and bulletins. They have seen their children develop an interest in farm facts and processes which mere reading, writing, and arithmetic never gave

them; and their children have learned things about agriculture which they themselves never knew and could never have learned from the old traditional methods of farming. They are, of course, still justified in their objection to mere "book agriculture" and the purely city-minded teacher. In order to teach agriculture effectively, the teacher must be a country-bred man who is trained in it, there must be school gardens and demonstration plots at the school or at home, and the period of schooling must be longer than the usual seven or eight years.

Even if the introduction of agriculture into the curriculum were in itself of no vocational value to the rural child—and its importance should not be stressed too greatly on this basis alone—it would nevertheless be of enormous value in breaking up the old stultified traditional curriculum and in vitalizing the whole school program. Agriculture has introduced project and demonstration teaching, thus attaching learning to the child's vital interests, and it has shown that the best way of teaching reading, writing, arithmetic, and spelling is through subject matter which challenges his interest.

Domestic science, as a part of the rural school curriculum, has faced exactly the same arguments that agriculture did, for farm people—and others—ridiculed the idea that farm girls could learn anything in school about domestic science and household management that their mothers could not teach them at home. Domestic science has quickly justified its place in the rural school program through its valuable instruction in food values, balanced diets, cooking and serving, household management, home conveniences and beautification, and sewing. It has in many cases given the farm woman her first glimpse of the possibilities of lightening her work, of the scientific care of her children, and of the beautification and decoration of her home. Instruction in nature study, gardening, plant diseases, etc., in the earlier school grades enables farm girls to accomplish a great deal in domestic science during the seventh and eighth grades. The school garden and school lunch have furnished projects for demonstration teaching and have thus added a new zest to school life; furthermore, the hot lunch has a distinct health value, for it eliminates the poorly balanced cold lunch brought from home.

The rural school is the best and most practical place for teaching manual training. Courses in this must of necessity consist

largely of hand and small-tool work, for the school cannot possibly furnish the specialized equipment for machine training. The professional man of the city has almost no use for manual arts, and the factory worker is a machine worker; consequently, it is the artisan class alone that can make practical after-use of the training offered in the manual arts departments of the city schools. The farm boy, on the other hand, has to be his own handy man, his own mechanic, carpenter, mason and cobbler. Because manual training is of value in its practical application to farm tasks, in the installation and development of farm and home conveniences, and in the respite it affords from other studies, it should be a part of every rural school curriculum.

The introduction of the social sciences into the primary schools is still a moot question to a great many people, but the fact that at least 85 per cent of the rural boys and girls never enter high school should be a sufficient argument for their inclusion. That the child does not escape from the economic, social and political life of his time merely because he does not attend high school is self-evident; but his need for a knowledge of the social sciences, in order that he may enjoy, participate and prosper in the life of society, is just as great as it is in the case of one who goes on to high school or college. G. H. Betts meets the argument that these subjects are too difficult for the elementary grades with the statement: "If we grant the economic ability to support good schools, then the curriculum offered by any type of school, the scope of the subject matter given the pupil to master, is the measure of the educational ideals of those maintaining the schools."<sup>8</sup>

Civics has been taught in some rural grade schools for as many as three decades. When it was first introduced, it inherited all the faults of the categorical, deductive method of presentation, and was merely the study of the geographical units of political organization and of the titles and names of public officers, even now civics textbooks are all too frequently only primers of political science, although the political organization in which the child will eventually participate is as a rule usually the last to interest him. The social factors which concern him most—his home, community, school, playground and church—should be brought to his attention first, he should be told the story of mankind and his

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<sup>8</sup> Betts, G. H. *New Ideals in Rural Schools*, Houghton Mifflin Company, New York, 1913, p. 57.

relationship to nature and to other people; he should be taught very early the economic arrangement of his home and farm and their relation to other occupations and their significance in the world. All these things are as much a part of his everyday environment as are plants and animals, and much more significant and understandable than an abstract multiplication table. Finally, he should be taught the political organization of society—the county, state and nation. If we concede the desirability of civic training for the rural dweller, then we must grant the necessity of putting civics in the rural school curriculum, for there is no course in the whole scope of learning that lends itself so well to the developing mind and the expanding environment, if it is properly taught and contains the proper subject matter.

Music, art, drawing, literature, and organized play not only enrich school life but they develop an appreciation of the beautiful and buoyant in home and community life, and for these reasons they should be a part of the rural school curriculum. These cultural elements are needed in rural districts to relieve the monotony of the occupational routine and to break down the isolation of rural people's life, for they lead to social gatherings which in turn develop social and cultural contacts and foster an appreciation and enjoyment of the larger world about them. However, in order to introduce these cultural elements into the school curriculum, there must be a physical reorganization of the school plant, and the old subjects of the curriculum must be modified from the point of view of the time element and the methods of presentation.

**Old Subjects Must Be Revised.**—The addition of six or seven subjects to a grade school curriculum, with no change in the old subjects, has resulted in an overcrowded curriculum. But even if the recitation periods were lengthened and the number of teachers increased, the curriculum still could not accommodate fifteen subjects, many of which run through several grades. The introduction of new courses should mean the elimination, or at least the stringent modification, of some of the old ones, because twenty days a month for eight months over a period of eight years can no longer be given to arithmetic, grammar, reading, spelling, and writing; nor is there time for the memorization of the details of geography and history and the bones and muscles of the human body. The method of teaching these subjects must be changed because of the limited time which can be allotted to

them, and because some of them can be presented better by the indirect method.

Reading, writing and spelling need not be taught as separate subjects, for they can be woven into every other subject in school. Grammar and arithmetic need but little separate treatment for they too can be taught in the development of other subjects. Arithmetic in particular, which has been overdeveloped in relation to its importance, needs only one-third of the time usually assigned to it, and even this smaller time would produce better results if it applied arithmetic to crops, animals and farm accounts, instead of teaching abstract numbers expressed in impersonal systems of multiplication and division. Grammar lessons would show better results if correct diction and sentence structure were expressed in terms of natural interests rather than in parsing and diagramming impersonal sentences. Subject matter of absorbing interest to the child provides better for the teaching of reading than material in successive assignments chosen merely on the basis of the new words it offers. Spelling can be taught more effectively by helping children to learn the meaning and spelling of each new word as it appears in their studies, than by the systematic memorization of words, selected on the basis of the number of syllables or initial letters. Writing likewise can be taught equally well as a part of other subjects. If all these fundamental subjects are taught in the process of teaching agriculture, domestic science, civics, geography and hygiene, there will then be sufficient time for the new subjects, and rural grade school education will be vitalized.

In addition to the modification of the above courses, the content of such courses as geography, history, physiology and literature needs to be revised in order to relate them more directly to an interpretation of life. There is no reason why nature and farm life should not have some place in the subject matter of the reading which is taught in the earlier grades, or in the courses in literature which are given during the last two years in the primary schools. The time given to geography should not be spent in memorizing boundaries and the names of rivers, capes, bays and capitals; it should be devoted to what is now known as physical, commercial and human geography. Such a course would begin with the topography of the community and the products of the neighboring farms, rather than with such abstract concepts as "The world is round and, like a ball, seems hanging in the air."

History can also be related to the pupil's agricultural and industrial life just as easily as to ancient dates and decisive battles, physiology should be a study of health, sanitation and hygiene, instead of the memorization of the different parts of the human body.

In brief, if the course of study is not based upon the knowledge of farm work and life that the child already has, it disregards its best approach to the whole educational program. If it consists of abstractions and uses formal teaching methods it will drive students away from the schools. On the other hand, if it restricts the main purposes of its courses to farm knowledge and farm interests, it will rob the child of the broader knowledge and interest in education citizens should have. But if it uses the farm environment as the natural approach to school training, it is using good pedagogy and, in addition, it is teaching something of value about farm life.

#### LARGER AND MORE ADVANCED SCHOOLS

**Consolidation for School Improvement.**—The only purpose of school consolidation is to furnish better education and better schools for rural children. Its task is the elimination of the weaknesses in the organization and conduct of the rural school of the past and present, through supplying a better curriculum, better teaching, supervision and administration, better organization and support, better equipment, and larger enrollments and better attendance. All these are possible only through consolidation.

There are various types and degrees of consolidation, depending on the immediate object to be accomplished and upon the economic, social and geographic conditions under which the consolidation is to be effected. Its objectives are fourfold: (1) to provide high school training for rural boys and girls; (2) to eliminate the waste arising from the small enrollment and poor attendance in many district schools; (3) to provide better graded schools; and (4) to provide schools which will meet all the requirements of an adequate educational program. These objectives have led naturally to three types of consolidation: (1) the centralization of high schools at one point which will serve a number of local districts, the one- and two-room district schools continuing to teach the lower grades; (2) the complete organic union of

two or more local districts, and (3) the consolidation of a definitely defined school area—a township, for example—and the centralization of the entire school program in this larger school. This last, toward which the other two are tending, provides the only type of school to which we can look for the ultimate solution of all rural school problems—the New Rural School.

It is calculated that 90 per cent of the schools which serve this country's rural population can be consolidated, the only obstacles to complete consolidation being the isolation in sparsely populated districts, peculiar topography, or poor road organization or equipment. But these obstacles will be removed completely by the good-roads movement, which is making possible rapid and comfortable travel over any distance which school consolidation may make necessary. In 1926, the Bureau of Education estimated that there were that year 158,000 one-teacher, and approximately 16,000 consolidated, schools in the United States, and consolidation was reported to be taking place at the rate of about 1000 schools per year. If these calculations were correct and consolidation has continued at this rate, there should now (1933) be more than 20,000 such schools. In 1926 there were about 150,000 teachers in consolidated schools, as against the 158,000 in the one-teacher schools, but the proportion is now undoubtedly in favor of those teaching in consolidated schools.<sup>4</sup>

Practically every weakness of rural school organization can be eliminated through consolidation, for under it every school can be properly graded and each teacher can be a specialist, the school unit is sufficiently large for good administration to be possible; the school's functions—study, recitation, demonstration and recreation—can be separated and its curriculum differentiated; and, finally, the school building and grounds can be made adequate for extra-curricular activities. If patronage is assured, the same economic savings are possible under education conducted on a large scale, as in business.

Old school buildings were deficient in their lack of room and of equipment for good lighting and ventilation, and water and sewage disposal systems, and in the opportunity to differentiate between the various school processes. The school grounds lacked space, play equipment and organization of any kind; the school

<sup>4</sup> *Biennial Survey of Education, 1924-1926*, pp. 130-131.

equipment did not include blackboards, maps, charts, globes, etc., or any teaching material, especially for the lower grades. Consolidation will not automatically correct all these defects, but they can be more easily remedied when the total funds of a given area can be devoted to one plant rather than being scattered over many. In Iowa, for example, there were formerly nine different schools per township, with one acre of ground for each school. In consolidation on a township basis, this would provide nine acres of land per school, the combined building space of the nine schools would afford ample room for the necessary classrooms, an auditorium, a gymnasium, a library, lunch-room, and laboratories, and for the adequate classification and instruction of pupils in separate grades. The money once spent for nine sets of school equipment can be spent on additional equipment for the one school; and a modern water and sewage disposal system can be installed in the consolidated school for the cost of digging and equipping nine wells.

The differences in the size of the school organization alone cannot account for the variations in city and country school attendance for, as has already been seen, the attendance laws in some states are less strict for rural schools, and country children are more frequently kept out of school to help with work at home, than are city children. There can be no doubt, however, that a bigger and better school, with high school and vocational agricultural facilities, better means of transportation, and the association with a greater number of other children serve to increase both enrollment and attendance. Even if the enrollment gained in no way except through the greater number of pupils now in high school, the gain would still be considerable. According to Eggleston, after consolidation, enrollment and attendance gained 51.2 and 71.6 per cent, respectively, in certain communities in Virginia:

Two years ago, one of my assistants worked out a table of certain communities in which, before consolidation, the number of teachers was fifty-six; after consolidation, forty-five. The gain in enrollment was over 50 per cent. Another table showed that in a given number of communities the enrollment before consolidation was 3185 children; after consolidation, 4814 children, a gain of 1629 in enrollment. For the same communities the average attendance before consolidation was 2107; after consolidation it was 3617. This in-



cluded consolidation with and without public transportation. Where public transportation exists, the average daily attendance is, of course, very much better.<sup>5</sup>

The chief objection made by local opponents of consolidation is the cost of transportation; but when we remember that school attendance, and not school expense, is the proper criterion of education, the increase in enrollment and attendance more than offsets the transportation costs

The urban child until recently has had almost a monopoly on the high schools, for practically all of them were located in towns and cities, and the school systems which maintained them were city systems. Few country boys and girls attended them, and any who did were considered as outsiders and were charged tuition. Going to high school was often the first definite step away from the farm, for it took rural boys and girls away from their own homes and communities, away from farm interests, and it filled their school hours with subjects and interests entirely foreign to rural affairs

It is not true that all consolidated schools afford high school facilities, or that all well located high schools attended by country boys and girls are connected with rural consolidated schools. But we have seen that one of the first objectives of the consolidation movement was to provide high school facilities for these boys and girls, and one of its greatest values is that it makes possible a high school education for hundreds of thousands of rural boys and girls which, under the old school system, was impossible. The percentage of rural grade pupils who have entered high schools is difficult to calculate. The total enrollment of pupils in high schools in 1927-1928 was only 15 per cent of the total enrollment of all kindergarten, elementary and high schools. Of the 4,224,907 who entered the first grade in 1917, it is calculated that 1,379,692, or 32.7 per cent, completed the eighth grade in 1924, and 622,091, or 14.7 per cent, completed the twelfth grade (high school) in 1928.<sup>6</sup> These figures pertain to the nation as a whole, the following are a better index to the rural situation: In places of 2500 population or less, only 25 per cent of the boys and girls from 15 to 18 years of age were enrolled in high schools in 1928-

<sup>5</sup> Eggleston, J. P., and Bruère, R. W., *The Work of the Rural School*, Harper & Brothers, New York, 1918, p. 191

<sup>6</sup> *Biennial Survey of Education, 1927-1928*, p. 454

1929, as against 70 per cent for the same age group in urban centers.<sup>7</sup> From these two groups of data it is readily seen that rural high school enrollment lags badly when compared with the urban. The New Rural School must make a high school education accessible to every rural child, and, as Table 86 shows, consolidation takes a long step in this direction.

TABLE 86—SOME RESULTS FROM SCHOOL CONSOLIDATION, RANDOLPH COUNTY, INDIANA<sup>8</sup>

Schools, Teachers, and Pupils	Number of Schools	
	Before Consolidation	After Consolidation, April, 1920
One-room schools	131	4
Commissioned high schools	1	16
High school pupils	61	718
Teachers in graded schools	148	86
Percentage of eighth-grade graduates in high school	21-50	96

**Secondary Education for Rural Youth.**—The consolidation movement would have brought into existence a real rural high school with a specialized rural curriculum, even if no Smith-Hughes Act had ever been enacted. While the farm-life school program will be carried out all the more rapidly with the encouragement of federal assistance, the agricultural vocational educational program will develop more rapidly because of the consolidation movement already in progress. A system of farm-life schools was in existence in North Carolina prior to the passage of the Smith-Hughes Act, Georgia had Congressional district agricultural high schools, Mississippi had country high schools, New York has a number of sub-agricultural schools which offer courses six months per year for three years, and a number of other states gave financial support to village high schools for agricultural training.

The vocational agricultural high school system established in

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 114.

<sup>8</sup> Hayes, A. W., *Rural Community Organization*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1921, p. 63.

every state in the country by the Smith-Hughes Act is the outstanding step in making higher education available to rural boys and girls. The Act provides for schools, teachers, and teacher training; and the high schools it creates, which will probably eventually be within the reach of every farm boy and girl in the country, will teach rural children and adults agriculture and domestic science. A brief description of the types of courses offered by these schools has already been given in Chapter XV. Without doubt, more people will in a short time be studying agriculture and home economics in these schools than are at present taking these courses in colleges; and they will be attended by thousands of boys and girls who would never have gone to high school had these schools not been vocationalized. The Smith-Hughes schools and the rural consolidated schools should and will work together in offering further and better education to rural people.

**Consolidated Schools and Community Activities.**—The consolidated school is a community institution to a far greater degree than the small district school ever was, for the act of consolidation itself initiates a certain community consciousness. The consolidated school building is a pride to the community, and it increases community activities and develops a community consciousness hitherto non-existent. There is usually an auditorium in which school and community meetings can be held, and moving picture equipment is often installed. The school is the scene of farmers' institutes, extension courses and demonstrations, and it often houses the community library. The grounds afford space for organized athletics, and there are enough students for athletic teams. The greater number of teachers makes them felt as a community influence. The community is in every way enlivened and bettered because, probably for the first time in its existence, it has a real community institution; and it broadens its relationships with other communities, if in no other way, through the demands consolidation makes for the better transportation of pupils.

J. H. Cook, former State Superintendent of Public Instruction in Ohio, made a study of the community's use of the consolidated school as a center, and he found, in a number of communities, that the first year after school consolidation saw over ten times as many public meetings as the year preceding consolidation. Practically the same findings were reported by Eggleston

and Bruère in their Virginia study. Mr. Cook quotes the following statement made by a resident of a consolidated district:

Before the schools were centralized my son seemed to know no one when we rode about the township. Now as we ride about, a boy or a girl will yell, "Hello, Sammy," or wave greetings at a distance. When I inquire, "Who is this?" he often gives names entirely unfamiliar to me. Through my son I have become acquainted with many excellent people whom, otherwise, I would never have known.<sup>9</sup>

A. W. Hayes quotes the principal of a consolidated school in Louisiana as follows:

The consolidated rural school and its district possess strong potentialities because of the following reasons: the school is the greatest mutual interest in the district, it is through the school that almost every home in the district is reached. The school is the natural center for all community activity. The school auditorium furnishes a meeting place for community organizations. The school leads to social improvement through lectures, plays, moving pictures, lyceum courses, etc.; it enlarges the farmer's acquaintance, not only in his own districts but by various schools programs. The consolidated school increases personal and civic pride. It leads to good roads and enhances the value of land. The home economics course for girls and the agriculture course for boys, offered in the consolidated school, revolutionize the farm homes.<sup>10</sup>

A list of the advantages offered by a consolidated school system over any other school system provides a summary of the part consolidation is destined to play in facilitating the advent of the New Rural School.

1. Consolidation makes possible a better school curriculum
2. It enlists and coordinates financial support.
3. It insures better school buildings
4. It provides bigger school grounds.
5. It provides better school equipment.
6. It makes possible better supervision and administration.
7. It grades the school work
8. It specializes the work of the teachers
9. It increases enrollment and attendance.
10. It makes possible high school training for rural people.

<sup>9</sup> Cook, J. H., "The Consolidated School as a Community Center," *Publications, American Sociological Society*, vol. 11, 1916, pp. 97-105

<sup>10</sup> Hayes, A. W., *Rural Sociology*, p. 365

11. It increases the scope of vocational work
12. It increases and develops community consciousness and activities
13. It encourages good roads
14. It is probable that it increases the value of land adjacent to consolidated schools
15. It creates schools which perform their educational and community functions more efficiently than any other school.

### RURAL ADULT EDUCATION

**Demonstration and Extension Teaching.**—The farm and home demonstration work of the agricultural colleges of this country, discussed to some extent in Chapter XV, is the greatest project in adult education in the world. It had at first as practically its only objective, an increased agricultural production, but the scope and vision of the work have gradually widened. It is difficult to conceive of any aspect of rural life on which this project at present does not at least touch in some part of the United States—production, marketing, credit, taxation, every phase of domestic science, child care, health, recreation, pageantry, leadership training, and community organization. There is still room for improvement in pedagogical methods, schemes of rural organization and attempts to reach the whole rural population, but this will be accomplished in due time. Table 87 gives the latest summary of the work of this system of rural education.

TABLE 87.—FACTS ABOUT AGRICULTURAL EXTENSION, 1929<sup>11</sup>

County associations supporting extension work	3,195
Members in county associations	618,409
Communities in counties with service	87,097
Communities with organized extension programs	58,601
Volunteer local leaders of adult projects	179,559
Adult leader training meetings	31,330
Attendance	312,623
Volunteer local leaders of junior projects	58,258
Junior leader training meetings	11,572
Attendance	99,121
Adult clubs	36,208
Membership in adult clubs	907,528
Total of all meetings	683,305
Total attendance at all meetings	21,951,317
Bulletins distributed	5,608,604

<sup>11</sup> *Extension Circular 106*, United States Department of Agriculture, Washington, D. C., 1929

John D. Willard, field representative of the American Association for Adult Education, and for many years an agricultural extension worker, makes the following statement:

At its worst, vocational education is mere animal training; at its best, it is the open door to a new world of cultural interest and experience. Much purely cultural education fails through lack of opportunity for integrating that which is learned with the activities or experiences of life. Vocational and professional students begin with a specific interest and confirm by practical application that which they learn, thus making it a more lasting possession. If the vocational teaching is well done, the process and problems open the door to causes and causal relationships, to collateral fields of knowledge, to related problems. Successful intellectual effort in one field gives greater facility for intellectual effort in all fields. Agricultural problems are rooted in the fundamental physical sciences. Problems of finance and distribution lead directly to the economic and social sciences. Home making is an art that calls on both physical and social sciences, and on esthetics as well. Community life is the expanded phase of home making. In all these fields the extension staffs in agriculture and home economics are teaching by demonstrations, lectures, leader-training courses, exhibits, publications and otherwise. Whether the effort is adult education depends less on the nature of subject matter or the attitude of the teacher than on the attitude of the student. If it is "purposeful and sustained effort by the student for the increase of knowledge, skill or appreciation," it is adult education.

Since the beginning of extension work in agriculture and home economics, a trend is noticeable toward broader concepts of subject matter and better pedagogical methods. The first teaching was wholly in technical fields, and with little student effort. After a time farmers and home makers were enlisted as participants in demonstrations. More recently, selected group leaders are given systematic training in leader-training courses.

Some extension workers feel that effort outside the technical field is not authorized by the nature of either federal or state appropriations, and in some cases this feeling is doubtless justified. Many more see the opportunity and feel the desire to guide their communities in cultural development, but are unable to do so. The teaching of technical subjects requires all their time and energy. Some lack training in things cultural. No extension specialist staff in arts comparable to that in agriculture and home making has been developed in any institution in the United States.

Yet a new chapter is opening. Rural people are requesting a broader

cultural service from the existing technical agency. The momentum of interest developed by agricultural and home economics extension teaching, together with the newly discovered leadership in rural life, constitutes the greatest present opportunity in rural adult education. Leaders in the extension organization have recently expressed the belief that the program can be broadened to include a liberal arts content also. Change will be gradual, but not difficult; much of the technical subject matter in the present extension program leads quite directly to physical, economic, social and psychological sciences.<sup>12</sup>

**Rural Adult Schools.**—There are many other means for adult education than through the work done in night classes under the Smith-Hughes school system, discussed in Chapter XV. For example, in 1929, there were 48,611 farmers attending continuation or evening classes in agricultural schools which were receiving federal aid,<sup>13</sup> and many other rural people are enrolled in university and college extension courses in which instruction is given either in the classroom, by correspondence, or over the radio. Their exact number is not known, but private correspondence schools are known to be instructing about 2,500,000 students, some of whom are undoubtedly rural.<sup>14</sup>

One of the most interesting types of rural adult education is the one which has been brought to a high degree of perfection in the Danish Folk Schools. The "moonlight" schools of Kentucky, Tennessee, and North Carolina approach this type of school,<sup>15</sup> although they have been devoted almost entirely to the instruction of adult illiterates. Berea College, in Kentucky, is the capstone, so to speak, of this type of school. Its purpose, as stated in its catalogue, is ". . . affording to young people of character and promise a thorough Christian education, elementary, industrial, secondary, normal, and collegiate, with opportunities for manual labor as an assistance in self-support." In addition to its vocational and academic instruction and work for resident pupils, it provides extension teaching which goes to the homes of the people. There are a few other institutions which have followed the foot-

<sup>12</sup> Willard, J. D., "Preliminary Inquiry into Rural Adult Education," *Bulletin of the American Association for Adult Education*, New York, 1929, pp. 7, 8, 9.

<sup>13</sup> See *Twelfth Annual Report*, Federal Board of Vocational Education, 1930.

<sup>14</sup> Willard, J. D., *op. cit.*, p. 10.

<sup>15</sup> See Stuart, Cora Wilson, "The Moonlight Schools of Kentucky," *Survey*, January, 1916, vol. xxxv, pp. 429-431.

steps of Berea College or undertaken similar enterprises, but these are not as well known and not as successful John D Willard makes the following brief statement regarding this type of education:

Mrs Elizabeth C. Morris, functioning under the Board of Education of Buncombe County, North Carolina, has led the attack on illiteracy so successfully that within eight years 5500 of the 7000 adult illiterates in the county have learned to read, have attained a new philosophy of life and have found a wider world of interest The Buncombe County program is a worthy model for hundreds of counties with a similar problem

South Carolina has a state-wide plan for serving those whose elementary education is limited Two hundred and fifty-one "Lay-By" schools were held in 1928 under the leadership of Miss Wil Lou Gray, of the State Department of Public Instruction. Seven thousand seven hundred and twelve adults enrolled in 1929 No students who have progressed beyond elementary grade work in English are accepted for these schools A picked corps of 179 teachers was trained for the summer service in a one-week institute at Winthrop College At the close of the season "graduation" is held at Clemson College Here, as in North Carolina, the new outlook on life which comes to the students is even more important than the increase of specific knowledge and skill <sup>16</sup>

As far as the writer knows, there are only four folk schools, of the many that have been established, now in existence in the United States The Nysted Folkehojskole, at Dannenborg, Nebraska, has been in continuous existence since 1887, but beyond this fact there seems to be no published information The same is true of the Dannebod Folkehojskole, at Tyler, Minnesota, organized in 1888.<sup>17</sup> Ashland College, at Grant, Michigan, first organized by a group of Danes in 1882 and discontinued in 1920, was reorganized in 1928 and has operated for five summer and three winter sessions since that time Chester A Graham, the principal, says of this school: "Ashland Folk School has no significance as a school apart from its relation to the neighborhood in which it is located . . . It has been called 'A Rural Thought Center' People from the farms and the villages feel at home here . . . Here the people, young and old, gather regularly for

<sup>16</sup> Willard, John D., *op. cit.*, p. 24.

<sup>17</sup> Willard, John D., and Landis, B. Y., *op. cit.*, chap. xii.



recreation, for lecture and discussion, and for the deep culture of fellowship so necessary in any civilization."<sup>18</sup> No person under 18 years of age is permitted to enroll for courses. The subjects dealt with, in the main, are "Social Problems, Economic Problems, Biography, Dramatic Production, Literature, Group Singing, Gymnastics, Handicrafts, Fine Arts, Philosophy, Natural Science, History, Psychology, Folk Dancing."<sup>19</sup> It is thus apparent that Ashland College is not a technical school, but a cultural center.

The John C. Campbell Folk School at Brasstown, North Carolina, represents the only attempt which has been made to install a pure folk school in a purely American rural area. This school is located in the mountain section of western North Carolina, and operates as a corporation. Its director, Mrs. Olive D. Campbell, has lived in the district for many years and has a thorough understanding of the people and their problems, in addition, she has made a comprehensive first-hand study of the Folk Schools in Denmark.<sup>20</sup> The need for the adaptation of the Danish idea to conditions in North Carolina is brought out in the following statement made by her:

Principles which have taken form in one country will doubtless take a somewhat different form in a new environment. We emphasize the experimental character of the John C. Campbell Folk School. It must find a new approach to old subjects, it must develop a new technique of teaching. Furthermore, if the teaching is to enrich rural life, it must be rooted in a deep belief in the country, not perhaps as it is, but as it may be: its power to satisfy, to offer a full life.<sup>21</sup>

This project as a whole includes more than a school, for, according to a pamphlet issued by the school, its program is threefold: (1) community activities, (2) the farm, and (3) the school proper. The plant consists of a home and a farm of 180 acres, on which in 1928 there were 55 head of livestock and 500 chickens, and which is managed by a young Dane. The institution can accommodate 100 students who attend school during the winter

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>20</sup> See Campbell, Olive D., *The Danish Folk School*, The Macmillan Company, New York, 1928.

<sup>21</sup> Campbell, Olive D., "John C. Campbell Folk School," *Rural America*, November, 1926, p. 12.

months and live there while they study. The school curriculum is diversified, for in addition to such rudiments as reading, writing, arithmetic, vocational agriculture and home economics, courses are given in history, geography, sociology, civics, nature study and literature, and pageantry, dramatics, and other types of community art are taught and practised. The community activities included in the program consist of such projects as "The Brass-town Savings and Loan Association," with a branch for junior members, the "Brasstown Farmers' Association," which is a cooperative purchasing association, a woman's club, a community hatchery, and a cooperative mill and wood-working plant.

There is without doubt a great need for more effective agencies to keep the actual agricultural workers—the adults—informed regarding the latest discoveries in the sciences they must use, and to give them the opportunities for cultural training which surround city people—the libraries, art galleries, museums and theaters. It is the folk school, or some adaptation of it, which offers the great possibility, although it is not here held that the Danish Folk School can be copied *in toto* in the United States.

**Other Agencies of Rural Adult Education.**—There are, in addition to the more or less institutionalized agencies of rural adult education just discussed, numerous semi-institutional and voluntary agencies which are treated elsewhere in this book—farmers' organizations, the rural press, the church, community clubs, child welfare institutes, parent-teacher associations, Chautauquas, rural pageants, drama and music, the radio, parental educational conferences, and other similar agencies.

This chapter has presented not a blueprint for an ideal rural school system or, indeed, for any system of rural education, but rather a picture of the dozens of agencies and processes which are working to stimulate a richer rural life. It is their testing and encouragement which constitute the program for those who are seeking an adequate education for our rural people.

#### QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Do you think that the curriculum of the rural grade school should be the same as that of the city grade school? Discuss fully.
2. Studying a subject sometimes inculcates that subject into one's habits. Can Latin be studied in this sense?
3. Judge the statement, "Education is based upon the process of learning to learn."
4. Why do farmers so often have an aversion to what they call "book learning"?

- 5 What arguments are there, if any, against the consolidation of all rural schools?
- 6 In what school grade do you think vocational education should be introduced?
- 7 List all the arguments you can give for and against the establishment of a system of folk schools in this country
- 8 Discuss fully the topic, "The radio as an agency of rural adult education"

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## CHAPTER XVIII

### THE PROBLEM OF RURAL HEALTH

#### GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS ABOUT RURAL HEALTH

**Current Ideas on Rural Health.**—The ideas of many people on rural health and on rural health conditions and opportunities are often incorrect, for many consider country people as hardy folk who enjoy a continuous high degree of health. City people assume that country people, both men and women, can endure a more arduous life and more strenuous labor than they themselves can, and this is a source of pride to the country people, who pity those who are deprived of their own opportunities for a hardy life.

There are two apparently perfectly valid bases for such conclusions. In the first place, it is generally known that country people work for long and irregular hours regardless of weather, and do heavy work. The domestic servants in city homes often come from country districts, and their willingness to undertake arduous tasks to which city women of the middle and upper classes would not subject themselves leads the latter to think of country women as physically superior. In the second place, fresh air, fresh food and good water are all conducive to good health and, since the country abounds in all of these, the natural conclusion is that good health must follow. Country people consider themselves fortunate in being free from the disease hazards of the city—the congestion, lack of fresh air, cold-storage food, and inside work. These lines of reasoning are not wholly fallacious, but they do fail to take all the facts into consideration.

There are likewise certain fallacious popular ideas on the subject of disease in rural districts. For instance, there is dirt everywhere on the farm, and even some filth is bound to be present on farm premises, wherefore the farm is held to be teeming with disease germs—not only a fallacious, but an erroneous, conclusion, since it is based upon the idea of the spontaneous generation of

disease germs. Statistics on insanity belie the popular idea that the loneliness of life in the country is directly responsible for insanity, particularly that of women. Stories of people who come down with typhoid fever after a vacation spent in the country are usually a misrepresentation of the actual facts.

But the knowledge regarding some of the other aspects of rural health is both accurate and universal, and the menace in certain conditions of rural life is widely recognized. Certain diseases, such as trachoma, typhoid fever, and enteritis, are known to be more prevalent in rural districts than in the nation as a whole. Poor sanitation is almost universal in the country, and personal hygiene is at a low ebb among rural people. Furthermore, practically all of the health agencies and medical experts are located in towns and cities.

#### A COMPARISON OF URBAN AND RURAL HEALTH

The conditions which make or destroy health among farm people can probably be best presented by listing the advantages and disadvantages which are present in rural life and which develop out of farm processes. There are numerous other conditions, but the ones listed are those almost automatically inherent in the conditions of rural life. Among the advantages are the abundance of fresh air and sunshine, the small number of people per unit of area, the outdoor life and exercise; the plainer, simpler, fresher food, the relatively slight chance of accidents, and the absence of noise and other similar disturbances. The disadvantages incident to rural life are the exposure to all kinds of weather; the heavy physical strain of the work, the poor medical facilities, the presence of animals, insects and other disease carriers; and the overwork which is necessary at times.

**Rural and Urban Mortality Rates.**—The rural death rate for this country is and has been lower than the urban rate. The outstanding fact in Table 88, which gives data on rural and urban death rates, is that both rates have declined fairly steadily, the urban much more rapidly than the rural. The urban rate declined 4.9 per thousand persons from 1901-1927, as against a decline of 3.7 in the rural. The urban rate in seven states was lower than the rural for one or more of the six years from 1920 to 1925 inclusive; this was true of Delaware for all six years; of Michigan and New Hampshire, for five of the six years, of Connecticut,

TABLE 88.—RURAL AND URBAN DEATH RATES FOR REGISTRATION AREA OF THE UNITED STATES<sup>1</sup>

Year	Urban	Rural	Rural Advantage
1901-1905	17.4	14.1	3.3
1906-1910	16.4	14.2	2.2
1914	14.5	12.3	2.2
1915	14.2	12.3	1.9
1916	15.0	12.9	2.1
1917	15.2	13.0	2.2
1918	Data not comparable		
1919			
1920	14.1	11.9	2.2
1921	12.3	10.9	1.4
1922	12.7	11.0	1.7
1923	13.2	11.5	1.7
1924	12.8	10.9	1.9
1925	12.9	10.7	2.2
1926	13.4	11.1	2.3
1927	12.5	10.4	2.1

New Jersey, and Ohio, for four; and of Indiana, for one of the six years.

The tables for the various age groups would probably show a death rate very different from that shown by the gross mortality tables, because of the high death rates among children and the low death rates among the middle-aged group. Since vital statistics are very complicated, and since the population groups used as a basis in the census data differ from those on which the mortality statistics for the registration area are based, we shall indicate only the factors which would tend to show different results if standardized tables were used.

It was seen in Chapter IV that in 1930 the farm population had 1.8 per cent more than its share of children under 5 years of age. According to the mortality tables, the death rate for this age group was 21.7, as against 13.1 for the country as a whole. Thus it is clear that the high ratio of country children raises the rural death rate considerably, even though infant and child mortality rates are lower in rural than in urban areas.<sup>2</sup> On the other hand, the

<sup>1</sup> *Mortality Statistics of the United States, 1914-1927*, Table IA. Municipalities of 10,000 or more inhabitants are designated as urban, smaller places being listed as rural.

<sup>2</sup> *Infant Mortality Statistics, 1928*, Table A.B.

cities have 4 per cent more than their share of people in the age group 20-24, and 20 per cent more than their share in the age group 25-34. The urban mortality rate for the age group 20-24 was 38.4, and 43.5 for the age group 25-34. Both of these exceed the rate for the total population and consequently tend to raise the urban rates, but not, however, as much as the high ratio of children in the country raises the rural rates. Thus it is apparent that gross mortality rates do not indicate the total advantage of the rural over the urban population.

**Rural and Urban Disease Rates.**—The information obtained from the medical examination of our drafted soldiers in the World War furnished data on rural and urban health. However, thousands of men who had spent their lives in fairly good-sized cities were classified as rural, for only places of 25,000 or more inhabitants were classified as urban, every other place being rural. Furthermore, Davenport states in the report that it is highly probable that city examining boards were much more critical than those which worked in small cities, in towns, and in the open country. Accepting the figures as given, the following facts are revealed:<sup>a</sup>

1 There were 557 defects per 1000 men examined, the rural rate being about seven-eighths of the urban (rural, 528, urban, 609).

2 The rural rate was higher in 54 out of 115 specific defects, and the urban was higher in the remaining 61.

3 The rural rate was most pronounced in the five following diseases and defects: pterygium and trachoma (both diseases of the eye), mental deficiency, muscular rheumatism, and bullet or other recent wounds. The five in which the urban rate was most pronounced were drug addiction, otitis media (abscessed ear), low weight and stature, perforated ear drum, and cataract.

4 The following diseases had a higher frequency in rural than in urban districts, as indicated by the figure in each case:

Pellagra . . . . .	6 50
Trachoma . . . . .	2 23
Mental deficiency . . . . .	1 82
Anemia . . . . .	1 57
Cancer . . . . .	1 43
Pulmonary tuberculosis . . . . .	1 29

<sup>a</sup> Davenport, C. B., and Love, A. G., *Defects Found in Drafted Men*, War Department, Washington, D. C., 1920, pp. 348-403.

Benign tumor  
Asthma

1 22  
1 21

5 The mortality from common diseases decreased in the camps in proportion to the number of urban recruits

It should be noted, however, that the findings of the various studies of drafted soldiers in the World War do not agree. Furthermore, Sorokin and Zimmerman have compiled statistics on Civil War recruits which show very different results from those just cited, and Table 89 is taken from their book

TABLE 89—DISEASE IN ITS RELATION TO OCCUPATION SHOWING THE NUMBER EXAMINED AND THE RATIO REJECTED PER 100 EXAMINED FROM EACH OCCUPATION, U S ARMY, CIVIL WAR RECRUITS\*

Classes of Occupation	Number Examined	Number Rejected per 1000 of Each Occupation
All occupations	334,321	366 7
Professions	7,576	520 0
Mercantile	18,818	479 5
Skilled	75,761	433 9
Farmers	137,425	349 8
Unskilled (including farmers)	232,166	347 9

Several fairly careful comparisons have been made of the defects in rural and urban school children, the most extensive analysis covering 500,000 children Table 90 gives the comparative percentages of the various defects.

TABLE 90—DEFECTS IN RURAL AND URBAN SCHOOL CHILDREN\*

Type of Disease	City	Rural	Urban Advantage	Type of Disease	City	Rural	Urban Advantage
Heart disease	40	74	34	Breathing defects	2 10	4 30	2 10
Mental defects	20	80	60	Ear defects	1 28	4 78	3 50
Lung defects	32	1 25	93	Enlarged glands	2 70	6 40	3 70
Anemia	1 50	1 65	15	Malnutrition	7 65	16 60	8 95
Unclean	17	1 70	1 53	Eye defects	13 43	21 00	7 57
Skin disease	3 30	3 53	23	Adenoids	12 30	23 40	10 90
Curvature	13	3 30	3 17	Tonal defects	16 42	28 14	11 72
				Teeth defects	33 58	48 80	15 22

\* Sorokin, P A, and Zimmerman, C C, *op cit*, p 153

\* Wood, T D, *Health Essentials for Rural School Children*



Sorokin and Zimmerman make the following severe criticism of the information in this table.

"When one goes through these references, as has been carefully done by the writers, one does not find in them the sources for the above table. Therefore, in so far as this booklet is concerned, this table is rather dogmatic and is based on data of a somewhat mysterious character. We can but agree with Dr. Wood that 'the statistics [of the sources of his table] lack uniformity; they contain, doubtless, many errors' " <sup>6</sup> And to this we must add the fact that the method by which the computation is made from these sources is absolutely invalid

Miss Bengston studied 5826 school children in Renville County, Minnesota, and found that 4095, or 81 per cent of them, had one or more defects

In "An Investigation of Rural Child Life in Selected Areas of Iowa," Baldwin, Fillmore and Hadley made not only a detailed study of the rural child's environment, defects and anthropometric measurements, but also some comparative rural-urban investigations. Although in the main they found no outstanding differences, those which did appear are revealed in the following quotations from their report:

During the first twelve months the farm boys had about the same length of body as the city boys but were inclined to be heavier, particularly from six to eleven months inclusive. From twelve to seventeen months, inclusive, they tended to be somewhat shorter than city boys and very often noticeably under weight. From eighteen to twenty-three months, inclusive, they maintained a general similarity to city boys in length, but several individuals were either decidedly overweight or underweight. Finally, the older boys from twenty-four to thirty-six months, inclusive, were similar to the city group in height, but under their average weight <sup>7</sup>

Approximately the same statement was true of the girls covered in this study. They fluctuated above and below the city norm, but tended to be underweight between twenty-four and thirty-six months of age:

The children as a whole tended to fall close to the border line between the short and medium (height) groups. Thirteen- and

<sup>6</sup> Sorokin, P. A., and Zimmerman, C. C., *op cit*, p. 144.

<sup>7</sup> Baldwin, B. T., Fillmore, E. A., and Hadley, L., *Farm Children*, D. Appleton and Company, New York, 1930, pp. 198-199.

sixteen-year-old boys and girls were the exception to the general tendency. The boys at these ages tended toward being tall. Girls at thirteen tended toward being short and at sixteen dispersed toward both extremes in height.<sup>8</sup>

The data in these two quotations are typical of those in the study as a whole, and the survey indicates that there are no pronounced anthropometric differences between the rural and urban children of Iowa.

Dr. Frederick L. Hoffman, of the Prudential Life Insurance Company, has compiled the statistics presented in Table 91 on

TABLE 91 —DISEASES CAUSING MORE DEATHS IN COUNTRY THAN IN CITY<sup>9</sup>

Disease	City Death Rate	Rural Death Rate	Rural Excess
Typhoid fever	22.6	24.4	1.8
Malarial fever	2.6	3.7	1.1
Influenza	14.8	27.8	13.0
Dysentery	6.8	10.2	3.4
Rheumatism	8.4	8.6	.2
Apoplexy and paralysis.	87.9	111.9	24.0
Diseases of circulatory system	178.1	179.6	1.5

rural-urban disease mortality rates. The net rural excess for these diseases per 100,000 of the total national population is 290.

The mortality statistics for the registration area indicate approximately the same ratio, and they show also that smallpox, measles, whooping cough, pellagra, epilepsy, and convulsions cause more deaths among the rural than the urban population. The rather elaborate statistics on mortality in Table 92 are presented as a means of indicating the health problems that confront rural communities, and not to prove that the rural morbidity and mortality rates exceed the urban. This table, together with Table 88, shows that the death rate as a whole is lower for the rural population, but that the mortality rate for certain diseases is higher in rural areas.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 218-219.

<sup>9</sup> Hoffman, F. L., *Rural Health and Welfare*, Prudential Life Insurance Company of America, pp. 6-13.

# THE PROBLEM OF RURAL HEALTH

TABLE 92.—DEATH RATE BY TYPES OF DISEASE<sup>10</sup>

Class of Disease	Urban Rate per 100,000 Persons	Rural Rate per 100,000 Persons	Plus or Minus 1 Rural Rate per 100,0
Epidemic, endemic, and infectious	183 2	193 4	+10 2
General .	156 1	108 9	-47 2
Of the nervous system and organs of special senses	120 9	127 7	+ 6 8
Of circulatory system . .	216 6	168 5	-48 1
Of respiratory system	141 5	102 9	-38 6
Of digestive system	115 2	85 3	-29 9
Non-venereal, of genital urinary system	118 8	88 4	-30 4
The puerperal state	16 9	14 4	- 2 5
Of skin and cellulose tissue	3 8	3 4	- 4
Of bones and organs of locomotion	1 8	9	- 9
Malformation	16 4	12 9	- 3 5
Early infancy .	68 1	59 3	- 8 8
Old age	6 9	19 0	+12 1
External causes .	98 1	81 8	-16 3

The inability of rural people to obtain adequate medical care is no small handicap to rural health. Practically all the hospitals and clinics are located in cities, and if physicians continue to move to the towns and cities rural people will be entirely deprived of medical attention. Between 1906 and 1923, the number of physicians practicing in and near places with 1000 population or less decreased 18 per cent. In 1923 there was in such places only 1 practicing physician for every 1238 persons, as against 1 physician for 536 persons in cities of over 100,000 population, and for 688 persons in places with from 25,000 to 50,000 population.<sup>11</sup>

The Committee on the Grading of Nursing Schools says, "Nurses tend to live in cities and avoid the country";<sup>12</sup> and recent data show that physicians' services, dental care, health examinations, and hospital care are all increased with the size of the com-

<sup>10</sup> *Mortality Statistics of the United States, 1922*, pp 166-170. Rates are not given in the mortality reports after 1922.

<sup>11</sup> The Duke Endowment, *First Annual Report of the Hospital Section*, Power Building, Charlotte, North Carolina, 1925, p 38.

<sup>12</sup> "Nurses' Production, Education, Distribution, and Pay," Committee on the Grading of Nursing Schools, 370 Seventh Avenue, New York City, May, 1930, p 35.

munity, with "towns and rural areas" lagging considerably behind both large and small cities.<sup>18</sup>

**Conclusions on Rural Health Conditions.**—The author believes that the various statistics given in this chapter justify the following conclusions, and that in some of these conclusions are found the major health problems confronting rural communities

1. That the health of the individual on the farm is handicapped in early life is shown by the great number of defects in rural school children, by the high infant death rate, and the higher frequency among rural people of children's diseases which leave bad after-effects

2 That the general conditions of rural living offset the earlier handicaps of rural life is shown by the fact that fewer rural recruits were rejected during the World War, that the rural death rate is lower than the urban, and that life insurance companies consider rural people good risks

3 The study of the death rates for the entire country or for the separate states shows that the city, by means of its health program, is making more rapid progress in lowering this rate than are rural sections, in spite of the greater health advantages inherent in rural life.

4 Diseases caused by exposure, strain and overwork are more prevalent in rural districts, as are also those caused by poor sanitation and the lack of personal hygiene.

### MENTAL HEALTH ON THE FARM

**Statistics on Rural Mental Health and Disease.**—The War Department's statistics on drafted men, referred to earlier in this chapter, showed that mental deficiency, hysteria, and epilepsy were more prevalent among rural than urban recruits. On the other hand, the census report on the patients in hospitals for mental disease, from which Table 93 is compiled, shows that here the rural rate is much lower than the urban

The data in Table 94 indicate that in no age group, for either male or female, is the rural rate of mental disease as high as the urban. It is also seen from these figures that the rate among rural women is not only lower than that for urban women but lower than that for rural men, which would seem to refute suc-

<sup>18</sup> Committee on the Cost of Medical Care, "Medical Care for the American People," *Publication No 28*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1932, p 21

TABLE 93.—PERCENTAGE OF URBAN AND RURAL PEOPLE IN THE POPULATION OF THE UNITED STATES, 1880-1920, AND NUMBER OF ADMISSIONS TO HOSPITALS FOR MENTAL DISEASE PER 100,000 OF URBAN AND RURAL POPULATION, 1922 AND 1910<sup>14</sup>

Year	Population		Patients Admitted to Hospitals per 100,000 of Population	
	Urban	Rural	Urban	Rural
1920	51.4	48.6	78.8 (1922)	41.1
1910	45.8	54.2	86.0	41.1
1900 . . .	40.0	60.0		
1890	35.4	64.6		
1880 ..	28.6	71.4		

TABLE 94.—PERCENTAGE OF FIRST ADMISSIONS TO HOSPITALS FOR MENTAL DISEASE DURING 1922, PER 100,000 OF GENERAL POPULATION, URBAN AND RURAL, CLASSIFIED BY AGE AND SEX<sup>15</sup>

	Urban			Rural			Urban Excess		
	Both Sexes	Male	Female	Both Sexes	Male	Female	Both Sexes	Male	Female
All ages	78.8	89.6	67.8	41.1	46.4	35.5	37.7	43.2	32.3
Under 15 years	1.7	1.8	1.7	0.9	0.9	0.8	0.8	0.9	0.9
15 to 19 "	40.0	46.0	34.5	19.6	20.9	18.3	20.4	25.1	16.2
20 to 24 "	72.2	93.2	53.2	45.4	56.1	34.6	26.8	37.1	18.6
25 to 29 "	96.8	116.8	77.1	69.7	71.8	49.4	36.1	45.0	27.7
30 to 34 "	109.7	125.6	92.9	71.8	76.5	67.0	37.9	49.1	29.9
35 to 39 "	114.8	127.3	101.1	71.4	76.0	66.4	43.4	51.3	34.7
40 to 44 "	125.5	149.8	109.5	74.0	76.7	70.9	51.5	64.1	38.6
45 to 49 "	121.9	123.8	119.8	69.1	71.3	66.3	52.8	52.8	53.5
50 to 54 "	122.6	127.5	117.3	76.5	75.8	77.7	46.1	52.9	36.6
55 to 59 "	127.7	146.5	108.4	71.8	81.8	59.4	55.9	64.7	49.0
60 to 64 "	139.8	156.5	123.1	82.3	93.9	66.8	57.5	63.5	54.6
65 to 69 "	170.4	198.9	143.6	87.5	104.8	65.7	82.9	94.1	77.9
70 years and over	246.0	282.0	217.0	137.5	162.4	110.9	108.5	120.6	106.1

cessfully the once prevalent theory that rural women, because of the loneliness inherent in rural life, are filling our hospitals for the insane. Furthermore, a study of the "urban excess" column

<sup>14</sup> *Patients in Hospitals for Mental Disease*, Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Washington, D. C., 1923, p. 14.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 32.

shows that this excess is increased in the advancing age groups. A further analysis is made possible by Table 95, which shows that there is a steady increase in the rate per 100,000 people, from rural districts to small cities and to the largest cities

TABLE 95—FIRST ADMISSIONS TO HOSPITALS FOR MENTAL DISEASE DURING 1922, CLASSIFIED BY PREVIOUS RESIDENCE<sup>10</sup>

Residence	Number	Per Cent Distribution	Per 100,000 of Population
Total	71,676	100 0	68 2
Cities of 100,000 and over	25,383	35 4	92 5
Cities of 25,000 to 100,000	7,538	10 5	73 2
Cities of 10,000 to 25,000	4,487	6 3	65 3
Cities of 2,500 to 10,000	5,228	7 3	54 8
Rural	20,988	29 3	41 1
Unknown	8,052	11 2	.

The statistics in Table 96 are based on specific types of mental disease, and from these figures the relative prevalence of these diseases in rural and urban districts can be compared. Thus, the rural rate of first admissions per 100,000 population is lower than the urban rate in each group of psychoses, except those with pellagra, in many of the other groups the urban rate is over twice as high as the rural. The pellagra group is very small, but this disease occurs mainly in the south, where the rural populations are comparatively large. The insignificance of this group is indicated by the fact that it constitutes less than 1 per cent of the total.

### THE RURAL HOME AND HEALTH

**Food and Water.**—Correct food, its proper care and preparation, and good food consumption habits are among the chief causes of good health. In respect to food, rural people have a great natural advantage, for it is comparatively easy for them to have fresh fruits and vegetables, fresh milk and butter, and pure water. But each of these foods creates certain problems. Fresh fruits and vegetables spoil easily, and if the refuse from them is not quickly disposed of, it soon becomes a breeding place for disease germs. These foods also demand careful and proper preparation for con-

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 39

TABLE 96 —NUMBER OF FIRST ADMISSIONS TO HOSPITALS FOR MENTAL DISEASE DURING 1922, PER 100,000 OF GENERAL POPULATION, URBAN AND RURAL, OF SAME SEX, BY PSYCHOSES

Psychoses	Urban			Rural		
	Both Sexes	Male	Fe-male	Both Sexes	Male	Fe-male
All clinical groups ..	78.8	89.6	67.8	41.4	46.4	35.5
Traumatic . . . . .	0.2	0.4	0.1	0.1	0.2	(1)
Senile . . . . .	6.9	6.4	7.3	4.5	5.0	3.9
With cerebral arteriosclerosis	3.8	4.6	3.0	2.0	2.7	1.2
General paralysis	8.3	13.3	3.2	2.1	3.3	0.8
With cerebral syphilis .	1.0	1.3	0.6	0.4	0.6	0.2
With Huntington's chorea	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1
With brain tumor	0.1	0.1	0.1	(1)	0.1	(1)
With other brain or nervous diseases	0.7	0.8	0.6	0.3	0.4	0.2
Alcoholic	3.5	6.2	0.8	0.9	1.7	0.1
Due to drugs and other exogenous toxins	0.7	0.9	0.6	0.3	0.3	0.2
With pellagra	0.2	0.1	0.3	0.5	0.3	0.8
With other somatic diseases	1.9	1.4	2.3	1.1	1.0	1.3
Manic-depressive	11.0	8.6	13.3	8.2	7.3	9.3
Involution melancholia	2.0	1.2	2.8	1.1	0.7	1.5
Dementia præcox (schizophrenia)	18.1	20.3	15.8	8.6	9.7	7.4
Paranoia or paranoid conditions	2.3	1.9	2.6	1.0	1.0	1.0
Epileptic	1.6	1.9	1.3	1.3	1.9	1.1
Psychoneuroses and neuroses	3.3	4.1	2.6	1.5	1.7	1.3
With psychopathic personality	1.2	1.5	0.9	0.4	0.5	0.3
With mental deficiency .	1.7	1.8	1.6	1.6	1.9	1.3
Undiagnosed . . . . .	4.5	4.8	4.2	2.0	2.3	1.8
Without psychosis	5.7	7.6	3.7	2.6	3.6	1.5
Unknown	0.2	0.3	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1

sumption, for unless milk and butter are handled with extreme care, they also become prolific carriers of germs.

From the point of view of health, water, regardless of its sparkle, cannot be considered pure if there is any possibility of pollution at its source. A survey of 51,544 farm homes made by the United States Department of Health revealed that, in 68 per cent of the water used for drinking and cooking purposes, there was obviously a danger of potential contamination because of

privies or the promiscuous depositing of human excreta; and that, in the majority of cases, the water supply was exposed to pollution from stable yards and pigpens. This survey also found that the dwellings on only 32.88 per cent of the farms were effectively screened against flies during the summer.<sup>17</sup> In his survey of farms in Howard County, Missouri, Lehmann found the *bacillus coli* in the well or cistern of each of the 50 farms studied, proving that in every case these sources of the water supply were exposed to contamination.<sup>18</sup> In Greenville County, South Carolina, 93.42 per cent of the water supply was considered unsafe.<sup>19</sup>

The location, construction, and care of the source of the farm's water supply are major considerations in rural health, because typhoid fever, dysentery, cholera and many other parasitic disease germs are carried by water. Two of these, typhoid fever and dysentery, are much more prevalent in rural than urban districts. In the Sikeston Community in Missouri, 71.34 per cent of the wells and cisterns were located within 100 feet of the privy, and 34.83 per cent were within less than 50 feet; 23.12 per cent were within 100 feet of animal pens and yards, and 11.33 per cent were less than 50 feet away from such sources of possible pollution.<sup>20</sup> The open well prevails in thousands of farm homes in the southern states, and the shallow cistern is in use slightly farther north, while springs furnish the water in the mountainous sections. Country wells are usually shallow, the walls and curbing are poor, and the wells are seldom cleaned. These shallow wells furnish the water for probably two-thirds of the farms in this country. Deep wells are the only comparatively safe source of pure water, for, of all other types of wells, they alone do not need filters, and there is little chance of surface pollution.

Foods themselves are near at hand on the farm, but the proper facilities for handling them are very often absent in the rural home. Milk has been definitely proved to be active in the transmission of about twenty diseases, among them typhoid fever, tuberculosis and dysentery, the rural death rate from which greatly exceeds the urban. Handling milk is even more difficult

<sup>17</sup> Lumsden, L. L., "Rural Sanitation," *Public Health Bulletin No. 94*, United States Public Health Service, Treasury Department, Washington, D. C., 1918.

<sup>18</sup> Taylor, Carl C., and Lehmann, E. W., *op. cit.*, p. 14.

<sup>19</sup> Lumsden, L. L., *op. cit.*

<sup>20</sup> Taylor, C. C., Yoder, F. R., and Zimmerman, C. C., *op. cit.*



than insuring pure water, for once a safe source of water is constructed, the water problem is largely solved, whereas milk demands constant care under the best conditions. The dairies which supply milk to the city are usually carefully inspected by city, county or state authorities; the dairy herds are given tuberculosis tests, and the place and method of milking, cooling and storing the milk are all inspected. This expert inspection is usually lacking on farms which do not ship milk, their cows are seldom tested for tuberculosis, the place where the milking is done is usually inadequate, and there is no inspection of milking methods or of facilities for storing the milk. On such farms it is often kept in open crocks or cans in a cave or some other cool place. A refrigerator of some kind is absolutely essential for the proper storage of milk, butter, and other dairy products, but the Sikeston study showed that only 5.8 per cent of the homes were provided with refrigerators or iceboxes, and, according to the survey of the Columbia Community in Boone County, Missouri, only 59.4 per cent of the homes were thus equipped.<sup>21</sup>

Fruits and vegetables do not present the same health problems as are raised by other fresh foods, although dysentery, typhoid fever, cholera, and other parasitic diseases may result from eating them if they are contaminated or uncooked. The major problems presented by these two foods are their decay, and the refuse from them. Open garbage pails and cans are infested with flies and mosquitoes, both of which are disease carriers and both of which travel from barnyards, privies, and garbage cans to the table. In the Sikeston Community, 57.8 per cent of the housewives threw dish water and refuse in the yard. Few families in this district owned hogs or chickens, to which such garbage is generally fed.

**Eating Habits of Farm People.**—The amount and types of food consumed by farm families are generally adequate, although it is probable that farmers consume more heavy food than even manual laborers in the city require. Data have been gathered which compare the food consumption of the families of farmers and of urban workingmen.<sup>22</sup> Since they cover 950 farm families

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>22</sup> These data were calculated on the basis of a scientific standard of living whereby all the members of the family were equated in terms of adult male consumers. The calculations and comparisons were made by C. C. Zimmerman, in his master's thesis, "The Standard of Living on the Farm," North Carolina State College, Raleigh, 1921.

in 14 states, and 280 workingmen's families in 11 representative cities,<sup>28</sup> they are probably representative of the country as a whole. According to these figures, the average farm family of 4.8 adult males consumes annually 1653 pounds more of food than the average workingman's family in the city, an average of 346 pounds more per rural adult male. An analysis of the diet of these two groups is given in Table 97.

TABLE 97—AVERAGE YEARLY CONSUMPTION, IN POUNDS, OF CERTAIN FOODS IN URBAN AND RURAL FAMILIES WITH EQUIVALENT OF 4.8 MALES PER FAMILY<sup>29</sup>

Kind of Food	City Workingmen's Families	Farm Families
Meat, eggs, lard, and lard substitutes	907	1116
Butter and cheese	144	179
Other dairy products	2318	2616
Cream and evaporated milk	98	55
Sugars, syrups, molasses, and honey. . .	287	474
Fruits, fresh, canned, and dried . . .	952	1207
Vegetables, fresh, canned, and dried	2177	3248
Coffee	58	39
Cereals and their products	1742	1362

It is apparent from this table that farm families consume more meat, eggs, butter, cheese, sugars, fruit, and vegetables, and that city families consume more coffee and cereal products. The table reveals quite clearly that the diets of farm families are, from the point of view of health, superior to those of city workingmen, although it is quite probable that farm families consume too much meat and, in the southern states, too much cereal, especially corn meal. The doctors who collected the data for the city families stated that the diets of these families were deficient in whole milk, fresh vegetables and fruits, for farm families consume 298 pounds more of milk, 1071 of vegetables, and 255 of fruit each year than do the city families.

Farm wives and daughters are generally considered good cooks, but there is a vast difference between being able to cook to suit the family's tastes, and being a skilled dietitian. Farm women

<sup>28</sup> Bureau of Applied Economics, "Standards of Living," *Bulletin No. 7*, Washington, D. C., p. 3, and United States Department of Agriculture, *Farmers' Bulletin No. 1082*, and *Department Bulletin No. 410*.

<sup>29</sup> Zimmerman, C. C., master's thesis.

need to study balanced diets, children's diets, and food values for the sake of their family's health, they need to learn proper methods of cooking, canning and preserving even more than do urban women, for upon them falls the whole work of cooking, whereas there are specialized agencies which do some of this work for city homes.

**Disposal of Sewage and Sludge.**—The improper disposal of sewage and sludge constitutes a distinct menace to health, for sewage is a breeding place for disease germs. The pollution of the water supply by sewage has already been discussed, but there are other perils in its improper disposal. If sewage, particularly human excreta, is not protected from flies, there is a further chance for the spread of disease germs. Furthermore, the lack of toilet facilities leads to unhygienic habits which are damaging to health.

There is no rural problem whose solution is better known than the need of sanitary and well equipped toilets in farm homes; but unhappily, because of the convenience of the great outdoors, the privacy of the isolated farm family, and the high cost of installing water and sewage systems, this problem has remained largely unsolved. Outdoor privies, generally unscreened, are almost universally the farm family's only means of disposing of its excreta,<sup>25</sup> and often even these facilities are lacking. For convenience, the privy is generally located close to the house; and the surface drainage and seepage from it, the flies and other insects it attracts, and even dust particles carried in the wind menace the family's food and water supplies. The proximity of wells to privies in the Sikeston Community has already been spoken of, and this community would undoubtedly be found representative of others if similar information were gathered. The United States Public Health Service in 1914, 1915, and 1916, made a "Sanitary Survey of Fifteen Counties," in as many different states,<sup>26</sup> and this showed no toilets of any kind in over one-fifth of the rural homes in ten of these counties, the rate running as high as 67.9 per cent in Orange County, North Carolina, and 73.8 per cent in Union County, Mississippi. Over 90 per cent of the homes in each county had "grossly insanitary methods of disposing of human excreta," and this was true of 99 per cent of the homes in nine counties

<sup>25</sup> See chap. xiv on the Farm Residence.

<sup>26</sup> Lumsden, L. L., *op. cit.*

According to the President's Commission on Home Building and Home Ownership, the two extremes found in different sections of the country for farm houses with open vaults or no toilet facilities at all were 5.3 per cent in the Tobacco-Bluegrass section, and 54.6 per cent in the Appalachian-Ozark Highlands.<sup>27</sup>

There are six approved and well known methods of disposing of human excreta on the farm. The first and best is an indoor toilet with a septic tank or other decomposing agency, but because of its high cost, this method will not be universal for some time to come. However, the five following "dry methods," so-called, should make the sanitary disposal of sewage on farms universal: the earth pit, the water-tight privy, the pail closet, the dry earth, ashes, or lime closet, and the chemical closet.<sup>28</sup> The requisites for sanitation, regardless of the type of closet, are screening from flies, preventing seepage, and provision for chemical decomposition. No one of these five methods is expensive, and every farm should be equipped with one of them.

The failure to dispose of sludge and sewage properly always creates a nuisance about the premises. Besides making a very unsightly spot near the house, dish water which is thrown into the backyard facilitates surface drainage or seepage into wells and cisterns, makes mud holes, and attracts flies and other insects, and chickens. Only 9 out of 428 houses in the Sikeston Community were provided with sinks or other facilities for the disposal of sludge, and sinks were found in 52 per cent of the 10,000 farm homes studied by the home demonstration agents of the United States Department of Agriculture.<sup>29</sup> The President's Commission on Home Building gives the following extremes for this in the different sections of the country: no sinks, 70 per cent in the New England-New York, and 38.4 per cent in the Appalachian-Ozark Highlands sections; no combination of sink and running water, 20 per cent and 61.6 per cent, respectively, in these same two sections. In many cases the sinks are for household convenience only,

<sup>27</sup> Warren, G. M., "Sewage and Sewerage of Farm Homes," *Farmers' Bulletin No. 1227*, United States Department of Agriculture, Washington, D. C., 1922; and Lumsden, L. L., and Stiles, C. W., "Safe Disposal of Human Excreta at Unscreened Homes," *Public Health Bulletin No. 68*, United States Public Health Service, Treasury Department, Washington, D. C., 1917.

<sup>28</sup> *Report of the Committee on Farm and Village Housing* (mimeographed), Appendix II, Washington, D. C., December, 1931, p. 28.

<sup>29</sup> President's Commission on Home Building, *op. cit.*, Appendix II, p. 27.

the sludge being piped to some spot not far from the house for disposal<sup>80</sup>

Bad personal habits which menace health are bound to result from poor sanitary conditions and the lack of health facilities. Because their homes lack running water, farm people fail to bathe frequently, to brush their teeth, or even to wash their hands thoroughly before eating, because of the lack of toilets, they fail to respond immediately to nature's calls. Uncleanliness, constipation, and ill health are the natural results of practices such as these.

**Protection Against Flies.**—The importance of safeguarding food by screening against flies has already been indicated, and attention was also called to the fact that 32.88 per cent of all the farm homes covered in the study made by the United States Public Health Service were without screens. Several other studies have given information on this item. In his Nebraska study, Rankin found that 95 to 99 per cent of all the farm houses had screened doors and windows, and 41 to 47 per cent had screened porches.<sup>81</sup> In sharp contrast to this are the findings of Taylor and Zimmerman in North Carolina, for here windows and doors were screened in only 30.4 per cent of the owners' homes and 12 per cent of the tenants', while only 3.9 per cent of the Negroes' homes were screened.<sup>82</sup>

Flies and mosquitoes are the two major reasons for screening houses, for both are disease carriers, and flies are also carriers of filth; furthermore, both of them create discomfort. Flies are known to carry typhoid fever germs, and Dr Harry Moore warns against them where children's diseases are present. "Infection, too, becomes a greater danger during the summer when flies are present."<sup>83</sup>

The following almost elementary lesson on flies is one which rural people could well learn

In *Cleanliness and Health* you have read that the house fly lays its eggs upon animal manure, in garbage, or on some other decaying substance. Within a few hours the eggs hatch into larvæ which are called maggots. The maggots eat almost continuously and grow

<sup>80</sup> Ward, F. E., *Department Circular No. 148*, United States Department of Agriculture, Washington, D. C., November, 1920.

<sup>81</sup> Rankin, J. O., "Nebraska Farm Homes," p. 42.

<sup>82</sup> Taylor, C. C., and Zimmerman, C. C., *Economic and Social Conditions of North Carolina Farmers*, p. 46.

<sup>83</sup> Moore, Harry H., *Public Health in the United States*, Harper & Brothers, New York, 1923, p. 101.

rapidly. After four days they turn into pupæ. The pupa is a resting stage, during which the animal does not feed but undergoes a marked change in body structure. At the end of about four days more the fly breaks the shell of the pupa case and comes out. There is a new generation of flies every ten or fifteen days. You know that flies not only light upon people and food, they also visit places of filth. Sanitarians have proved that they can carry the germs of certain diseases from one place to another. Some towns which have had no sewer system have reduced the number of cases of typhoid fever by requiring that all privies must be made fly-proof.

One of the most important ways to combat flies is to do away with breeding places. Flies prefer to breed in animal manure. The city, therefore, must see that stables are properly kept. Either the manure is removed every week or something is thrown upon it to prevent the breeding of flies. Borax (about ten ounces for eight bushels of manure) is commonly used. The use of automobiles and trucks instead of horses has helped to reduce the number of flies.

The city often urges a campaign against flies, particularly at the beginning of the fly season. City regulations require that restaurants and food stores shall be properly screened so that the food will be protected from flies. They require also that garbage shall be kept where it does not allow flies to breed.<sup>24</sup>

**The Farmstead.**—The location and organization of the farmstead may constitute health menaces in several ways. The farmstead as a whole is the place where farm people live, and the health standpoint is far more important in its location than even its convenience for farm work. Its location on high ground, its convenience to other buildings and for the care of livestock, the building materials used, and its planting—all these must be given careful consideration for the sake of those who live and work there. If the house itself is old, it is likely to be infested with the rats and other rodents and vermin that overrun old buildings, and, in addition, it is likely to be poorly lighted, heated, and ventilated. The barns, pens and yards should be located at some distance from the farmhouse, and so situated as to assure drainage away from the well and the house itself.

#### FARMING AND HEALTH

**Farm Work.**—Farmers are almost universally hard-working people, for work with crops and livestock must be carried on re-

<sup>24</sup> Turner, C. E., and Collins, G. B., *Community Health*, D. C. Heath and Company, New York, 1928, pp. 97-99.

gardless of the hour or weather. The work necessary to maintain the farm and the farm home leads, in the case of almost every farm adult and, sometimes, even the children, to extreme and dangerous fatigue, which perhaps accounts for the great number of deaths from apoplexy among farmers. Livestock and poultry need the maximum care in bad weather, and this exposure to the severity of all kinds of weather, with the wet clothes and cold feet that accompany it, undoubtedly contributes materially to the high frequency of muscular rheumatism and pulmonary tuberculosis among rural people. Hernia is common among farmers because of the severe and sudden strains to which they are subjected in handling animals and lifting heavy loads. Women have to lift and carry large quantities of fuel and water, and this, together with the driving care of their household duties, often leaves them in a precarious condition at childbirth. Even the children's health is jeopardized, for they are sometimes put to work on the farm before they are old and strong enough to handle the tasks given them. There is practically no farm man or woman, particularly in the sections where the farm entrepreneur does his own work, who does not overdo, either constantly or at times.

**Farm Accidents.**—Because those who are injured by accidents in farming do not lose their jobs and become public wards, because there are other occupations which are far more dangerous than agriculture, and because farm accidents happen to individuals and therefore are not catastrophic, we are likely to conclude erroneously that accidents are of little consequence in the ill health of farm people. As a matter of fact, farming stands about midway on the list of dangerous occupations;<sup>55</sup> however, many occupations in this list are professions, the occupational conduct of which is almost unrelated to the accidents befalling the men engaged in them. In comparison with other manual workers, a rural worker ranks comparatively low in accidents, a quarry or concrete worker running ten times, and a carpenter or mason running five times, as great a chance of being injured while at work. In a list of the fatal accidents in 21 occupations in 1916, made by Frederick L. Hoffman, of the Prudential Life Insurance Company, agricultural pursuits stand twentieth, with a rate of only 35 per 1000 em-

<sup>55</sup> United States Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, March, 1915, p. 29.

ployed, or one person out of every 3500<sup>36</sup> Further statistics on this appear in Chapter V.

But even if accidents are not so frequent or so fatal in agriculture as in other manual work, minor injuries are probably more numerous Farmers work so universally with hand-machine-animal power that they are likely to suffer injury from small wounds, scratches, bruises, sprains, blisters, and animal bites The severity of the weather to which they are exposed is likely to result in heat prostration, sunstroke, or frost bite Farm women likewise suffer burns, scratches and cuts from the tools they use in their work Such slight injuries cause misery and may result in serious complications, and farm people should know thoroughly the principles of first aid, since these frequent injuries are often too slight to warrant professional medical assistance.

#### AGENCIES OF COMMUNITY HEALTH CONTROL AND PROMOTION

**The School.**—Health education should be a part of the elementary school's curriculum, for the school is the proper place to begin its study There are many ways in which the school can be used as an agency, for it can give health instruction through classroom teaching, physical training and corrective gymnastics, the supervision of the health of both pupils and teachers, and medical inspection, and through the use of the school plant and school program as a means of demonstrating correct living The school can also be used as a clinic by health officials, and illustrated educational lectures can be given there; its records can be made to show the chronological health history of every child that attends it<sup>37</sup> But a greater realization of the place of constructive health education is necessary before many of these activities can be undertaken, for health will have to be included as one of the major objects of education in building schools, planning curricula and programs, and engaging the staff of teachers However, we may expect to see rapid progress in this direction in the near future, due to the fact that the National Education Association has named health training as one of the basic elements of the common school curriculum

<sup>36</sup> This information is taken from charts furnished by the Statistical Department of the Prudential Life Insurance Company of America

<sup>37</sup> "Health for School Children," *School Health Studies*, No. 1, Department of the Interior, Bureau of Education, Washington, D. C., 1923



**The Hospital.**—The lack of medical facilities and agencies is one of the greatest drawbacks to rural health, for hospitals, clinics and dispensaries are, and must be, located in towns and cities. Simple clinics can be held in the rural school, especially if it is a consolidated school, but dispensaries need more consistent and constant direction than the school can furnish. Hospitals are institutions which must be staffed and operated by experts, and the only feasible location for them is the town or city, with its controlled heating, lighting, and water systems and its sanitary sewage disposal system.

According to Assistant Surgeon General Draper, of the United States Public Health Service, "Of the 3068 counties in the United States, 44.6 per cent in 1925 had no hospital for local or community use. In some States the supply is less adequate than in others. In Georgia, for instance, only 41 counties out of a total of 160 had a hospital of any kind for the use of the general population. In Florida only 23 out of 63 counties had such hospitals, in Texas only 96 out of 253 counties, in Missouri only 43 out of 115 counties; and in Kentucky only 46 out of 120 counties."<sup>88</sup>

However, there is no reason why rural people should be entirely deprived of hospital, clinic and dispensary services, for they can be supplied, and the best method of doing this is through hospitals supported by taxes. Bonds voted by the people themselves afford another method which has several advantages. The bond campaign is of great educational value; community, township, county or district hospitals so financed belong to the people and will be used by them to a greater extent; finally, the public report issued by these institutions provides further education in their value and use.

The Committee on the Cost of Medical Care recommended that in rural areas where suitable medical service is not now obtainable at reasonable costs, physicians be subsidized or salaried physicians furnish general medical service to the residents of those areas.<sup>89</sup>

Considerable progress is being made in rural hospitalization by such agencies as the Commonwealth Fund, which provided two-thirds of the cost of constructing and equipping hospitals in selected rural areas which agreed to provide the balance of the initial cost and carry the costs of operation and maintenance.

<sup>88</sup> Sanderson, E. D., *et al.*, *op. cit.*, p. 254.

<sup>89</sup> Committee on the Cost of Medical Care, *op. cit.*, pp. 121-122.

Under this plan, it has established six 50-bed rural hospitals in Rutherford, Tennessee; Glasgow, Kentucky; Beloit, Kansas, Wauseon, Ohio; Farmville, Virginia, and Farmington, Maine. The Fund appropriated \$358,438 for its 1927-1928 program, and only \$134,167 for its 1930-1931 projects, the decrease in the amount indicating that the support of the hospitals has gradually been taken over by the various districts themselves. The Rutherford district affords definite proof of the stimulation of local support. The year before the hospital was built, Rutherford County appropriated \$3400 for health work, in 1927 it fixed a special tax levy of three cents per \$100, which was raised to five cents in 1928, and to ten cents in 1929, thus supplying \$22,000 per year. The local chapter of the American Red Cross and the town of Rutherford furnished an additional \$9000. These totals equal \$1.50 per capita per year for health work in the Rutherford Hospital area whose approximate radius is 35 miles.

The Fund's work in other areas is described as follows: "Beloit, a community of 3315 population, is the county seat of Mitchell County in north central Kansas. The population of the entire area which will benefit by the proposed hospital is estimated at 78,000. Wauseon, with a population of 3100, is the county seat of Fulton County, in the extreme northwestern corner of Ohio. An area having a population of 97,000 will be served by the proposed hospital. The district is typically rural. A state law permits the organization of county health units, and it is hoped that the development of public health work and public health nursing will be stimulated by the location of a modern hospital in this community."<sup>40</sup>

These six hospitals, together with the Fund's demonstration work by means of visiting teacher programs and child health activities, have accomplished some of the most outstanding results in rural health in this country. The visiting teacher demonstrations, which have been supplied in three rural communities—Monmouth County, New Jersey; Huron County, Ohio, and Boone County, Missouri—have accomplished such things as changing the water supplies of rural schools, remodeling school buildings, and supplying such equipment as better lighting, heating and ventilation systems, new desks and seats which fit the pupils, school drinking fountains, and additional playground

<sup>40</sup> *Rural America*, January, 1928, vol. vi, no. 1.

space; through them the pupils' physical defects have been corrected and new foods introduced into rural homes.<sup>41</sup>

Child health activities were undertaken by the Fund in Marion County, Oregon; Fargo, North Dakota; Clarke County, and Athens, Georgia, and Rutherford County, Tennessee. The results of this work are evident from the following statistics. In Clarke County, Georgia, before it began its work, the death rate of children under 15 years of age was 93 per year for the four years, 1920-1923, after the Fund became active, this rate fell to 68 per year for the period 1924-1929, in this case a saving of 124 lives. In Rutherford County, Tennessee, from 1925-1928, the child-bed death rate of 812 mothers who had care was 2.5, as against a rate of 8.3 for the 2172 mothers who had no care. The infant death rates for these two groups of mothers were 12.9 and 39.2, respectively.

The fellowships granted had by 1930 enabled 82 physicians from the areas where the demonstrations were being presented to study at good medical schools. In addition to this phase of the work, the Fund conducts annual medical and nursing institutes for the benefit of all the local practitioners in each hospital district.<sup>42</sup>

The work of the Fund's rural hospital programs can be summarized as follows: They have provided modern hospital facilities in six rural areas, they have helped to raise the local standards of medical practice and, through scholarships, provided for good physicians to remain in the country and for young doctors to go into rural areas; they have encouraged the development of community public health activities, of which the hospital is the center; they have influenced nearby communities in improving their own hospital facilities, and organized hospital and health districts,

<sup>41</sup> Benedict, A. E., *Children at the Crossroads*, The Commonwealth Fund, New York, 1930.

<sup>42</sup> For complete details of the work of the Commonwealth Fund, see *Annual Reports, 1926 to 1931*, and the following books not cited above: *A Chapter of Child Health*, report of the Commonwealth Fund Child Health Demonstration in Clarke County and Athens, Georgia, 1924-1929, published in 1930; Mustard, H. S., *Cross-Sections of Rural Health Program*, report on Rutherford, Tennessee, hospital, published in 1930; Brown, M. A., *Teaching Health in Fargo*, published in 1929; Dinwiddie, C., *Child Health and the Community*, 1931; Wallace, J., *The State Health Departments of Massachusetts, Michigan, and Ohio, 1927-1929*, and *Press Release*, February 16, 1931—all publications of the Commonwealth Fund, New York.

they have cut down infant and childbed death rates, and have gradually raised the hospital scores in some places from 110 to 814 out of the possible 1000 points on the score of the American Public Health Association

The Hospital Division of the Duke Foundation is also vigorously attacking the problem of rural hospitalization. The "Indenture and Deed of Trust," filed December 11, 1924, sets apart 32 per cent of the income from \$34,000,000 for the construction and maintenance of hospitals.<sup>43</sup> The following quotation sets forth the provisions under which assistance is given by the Duke Foundation:

Under the provisions of the Trust, the Trustees may give a sum not exceeding one dollar for every day a patient who is unable to pay is treated free of charge in a hospital not operated for private gain. It is provided further that the Trustees of the Endowment may expend any surplus of funds over the expenditure needed for the maintenance of charity patients, for the construction and equipment of hospitals. These two provisions, the one for the *maintenance* and the other for the *construction and equipment* of hospitals, are restricted in their application to the two States, North Carolina and South Carolina, until the hospital needs of the two States are adequately supplied, and then, when there is a surplus of funds over those needed for hospital work in the two States or when there is no longer a need of assistance from the Endowment, the Trustees may use the funds available to the Hospital Section in the hospital work of other States, the States contiguous to the Carolinas being given the position of preferred beneficiaries.<sup>44</sup>

Although this fund is not restricted solely to use in rural districts, both North and South Carolina are for the most part rural, and since the greatest need for hospitalization is found in predominantly rural counties, the greater part of the money has thus far been expended for people in small towns and rural areas.<sup>45</sup>

The *Sixth Annual Report* of the Hospital Division showed that 69 hospitals in North Carolina, and 34 in South Carolina—a total of 103 institutions—received contributions for care of free patients in 1930, this was an increase of 51 over 1925, the first year of the Endowment's existence. Care was given as follows: 397,858 days, full pay; 262,646 days, part pay; and 596,558 days, free

<sup>43</sup> The Duke Endowment, *Annual Report of the Hospital Section, 1925*, p. 10

<sup>44</sup> The Duke Endowment, *First Annual Report, 1925*, p. 136

<sup>45</sup> See The Duke Endowment, *Sixth Annual Report*, pp. 149-193

The hospitals assisted by the Endowment reported 107,009 out-patients in 1930, the patients visiting the hospitals 232,212 times <sup>46</sup>

The following quotation, the concluding paragraph of the most thorough study of rural hospitals which has been made, and which appeared in 1926, is probably the most concise summary of rural hospitalization :

The movement for the establishment of rural hospitals is on. Many methods are available. There are no legal impediments. New state laws are being enacted opening new ways. Any community may have a hospital, if it really wants it. Farmers are realizing the value of hospitals and are recognizing the handicap which the absence of hospitals and doctors places upon farming communities. Health and medical officers are increasingly taking notice of the health problem presented by the 50,000,000 people living in rural territory. Far-seeing leaders of the medical profession not only deplore the lack of doctors and hospitals in rural communities, but are actually attacking the problem. With the general establishment of rural hospitals, together with the resultant aid to the return of rural doctors, the health and social phases of equality of agriculture with other industries will be nearer accomplishment <sup>47</sup>

**Full-time County Health Officers.**—The presence, in a rural community, of one or more public health agents, whose duty is to promote health ideas, is even more to be desired than clinics, dispensaries or hospitals. These officers may be school, community, or county health nurses, or doctors who are not in private practice but give all their time to public health. There are one or more such officers in 32 states, <sup>48</sup> and in 1927, full-time health officers were employed in 337 counties and districts, Ohio leading with 47, North Carolina second, with 37, and Alabama third, with 30 <sup>49</sup>. In these three states, and also in Georgia, the county health officer or the district health commissioner covers a large part of the rural areas, conducting school clinics and dispensaries, promoting hospitalization, and acting as constant health police as well as agents of health education. The map on page 441 gives an indication of the counties having this full-time service in 1931.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid*, pp 24-25

<sup>47</sup> Nason, W. C., "Rural Hospitals," *Farmers' Bulletin No 1485*, United States Department of Agriculture, Washington, D. C., March, 1926

<sup>48</sup> "Whole-time County Health Officers," *Reprint No 837*, United States Health Service, Washington, D. C., 1923

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid*.

COUNTIES OR DISTRICTS, WHOLLY OR IN LARGE PART RURAL, WITH LOCAL  
HEALTH SERVICE UNDER DIRECTION OF WHOLE TIME COUNTY HEALTH OFFICERS  
JANUARY 1, 1931

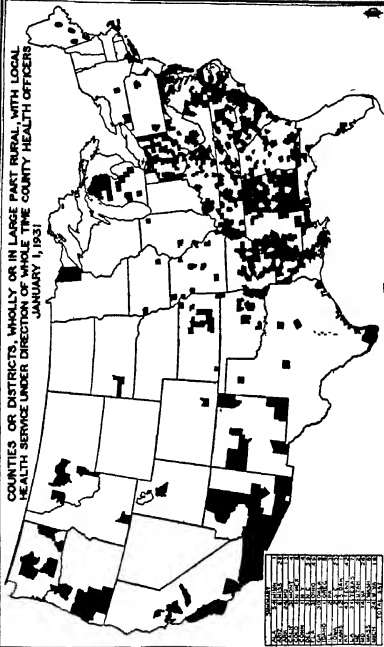


FIGURE 7

It is even possible that the enlightened citizens of some state will, in the near future, apply the principles of an equalization fund to hospitalization, as many states are now doing in the case of education, for the greatest need is often found in the areas where the funds for meeting it are the smallest. However, only when the rural community sees itself as an entity, and health as a part of its standard of living, will such practices, facilities and agencies become universal.

### QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Are erroneous ideas about health more current in the country than the city? Give reasons for your answer
2. How do you account for the fact that the rural death rate is lower than the urban?
3. Which of the weak spots in rural health can be remedied easily, and which only with difficulty?
4. To what do you attribute the good showing made by rural people where mental diseases are concerned?
5. Why do state and local units of government spend so much more money for education than for health?
6. What are your suggestions for attacking the rural health problem in a big way?

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## CHAPTER XIX

### THE PROBLEM OF THE RURAL CHURCH

#### THE FUNCTION OF THE CHURCH IN RURAL SOCIETY

**The Church's Share of Society's Labor.**—The church is one of the major social institutions, and in the definitely organized and thoroughly institutionalized life of society, it shares the field of society's work with the home, the school, government, and business. No functions of society, other than those served by these five major social institutions, have thus far shown a similar capacity to crystallize their activities into definite social organizations. Recreational and health activities are apparently tending to definite institutionalization, but as yet no specific form of organization for either of these has been definitely recognized as sufficiently universal to warrant its inclusion as a major social institution. The family, school, government, business, and religion are organized everywhere in American society according to definite social patterns; and wherever one of these is found, we can be certain that it has—or has had in the past—a function which the people consider essential or desirable and, further, that no other institution can fulfill that particular function satisfactorily. Thus the church is—or was—called upon to perform a definite part of society's labor, for otherwise there would be no churches.

The same process that develops specialization and division of labor in industry determines and develops the division of labor between the functions and programs of social institutions. Lindeman makes the point that segregation and specialization, and not accretion, are responsible for the growth of institutions.<sup>1</sup> Economy in the larger social life, like economy in industry, is developed only if each of these five major social institutions performs its definite share of work expeditiously and in cooperation with the

<sup>1</sup> Lindeman, E. C., *The Community*, The Association Press, New York, 1921, chap. vii.

other four. The church must do its own work efficiently and intelligently, or it will be done poorly or left undone, and if the church fails in this, it must give way to a new institution which will do this work.

The church has its part in assuring a well rounded and adequate standard of living for all; its failure in this means that individual and community life falls just that far below normal. If it tries to thwart the natural desire for any legitimate element in a standard of living, it becomes maladjusted to normal life, and thereby it not only restricts individual and community life, but, in seeking to perform what it conceives as its own function, it is casting seeds to the wind. The church must work in cooperation with other agencies and institutions.

**Religion and the Rural Church.**—It is sometimes assumed that the presence of churches and church organizations is a true index of religion. This is fallacious to an extreme, for they can vary as widely as business activities and profits, or physical activities and health. The assumption that the church is the most important religious agency in the average rural community is correct, but even here the difference between the church and religion must be kept in mind.

The function of religion is to help interpret individual and world life, to extend into the life of the world the emotions and feelings which prove of value in individual life, and to teach men how to live in accordance with the ultimate purposes of all life. An ultimate aspiration is always a part of religion, and religion has an undying and enthusiastic loyalty to that aspiration, and a formal program by which it believes it can be attained. The ethical concepts and the ultimate purposes emphasized by Jesus and His interpreters constitute the measure of the ultimate aspiration and the program of the Christian religion.

The church, like all other social institutions, is man made. It has religious functions to perform, and it is through performing them persistently and systematically that it has attained its present institutional form and activities. It has erected buildings as meeting places; it has sought to develop the ideals of Christianity in the lives of all people; it has brought people together to discuss their aspirations and to develop and emphasize their ultimate purposes in life, and it has naturally evolved programs by which these aspirations and purposes can be attained. A church may still

be a church, even if it does not perform all of these functions, but in no sense can it be an agency of the Christian religion. The problem of the rural church is not more buildings and more congregations, or even more meetings and more sermons, but, like that of all social institutions, to keep pace with the best thought of its time, to enlarge its vision, to adapt and adjust its program continually, to develop human values, and to enlighten and deepen men's convictions on those things by which life's activities are measured and its ultimate purposes attained.

### THE STATUS OF THE RURAL CHURCH

The status of the rural church was one of the first rural social problems to receive intelligent attention in this country, and studies of the rural church were the basis of some of the earliest courses in rural sociology. Just as the "rural problem" discussed in Chapter I was at first thought to be only the relative loss of the rural population, so one of the earliest causes of concern regarding the rural church was its decline and abandonment. Numerous rural church surveys were made between 1910 and 1920, and in 1920 the Interchurch World Movement set up the Town and Country Church Survey. This momentous undertaking was to be a nationwide survey not only of all rural churches, but of *all* churches; and, although it was never completed, the data it collected made possible a more thorough analysis of the rural church than has ever been made for any other rural institution, agency, or problem. Galpin makes the following statement in the Foreword of one of the books written in this survey:

The problem of the rural church will never again utterly baffle the mind and bewilder the soul of America with vastness and confusion. This courageous survey—this patient climb to the top of the mountain, this sweep of the comprehending eye over all the regions, over all the counties—has reduced the vastness of the rural church problem to some order and the confusion to some clarity.<sup>2</sup>

It is from the published reports of this survey and of the earlier surveys mentioned, and from the special studies made by the Census Bureau, that the data and conclusions in this and the following chapter are drawn.

Although no exact statistical measurement can be made of the

<sup>2</sup> Morse, H. N., and Brunner, E. deS., *The Town and Country Church in the United States*, Doubleday, Doran & Company, Inc., New York, 1923, p. v.

influence of the church, some statistical data do afford good indexes, and we shall therefore use the following three types of data. (1) church membership, (2) church attendance, and (3) church abandonment.

**The Decrease in Rural Church Membership.**—It is difficult, if not impossible, to calculate in exact quantitative terms the trend in rural church membership because the United States census reports on religious bodies, made in 1906 and 1916, do not completely differentiate between urban and rural data. While the census report of 1926 gives an urban-rural classification, the basis of its findings on many items are quite different from that of the two earlier reports. Nevertheless, these three reports apparently indicate that there has been a consistent gain in church membership in this country, that, between 1890 and 1916, the rate of this gain was more rapid than the rate of increase in the national population for the same period, and that the two were about the same between 1916 and 1926.<sup>\*</sup> Fry, however, warns against the conclusions generally drawn from these data.

More significant than the changes in the number of churches are the fluctuations in their adult memberships. The returns of the Government make it possible to compute for each census year the membership 13 years of age and over both for all churches combined and for each denomination separately. These data show that the adult membership, which totaled 31,868,000 in 1906, increased to 37,785,000 by 1916 and then to 44,380,000 in 1926. This means that during the earlier decade the number of church-members increased 18.6 per cent and during the last ten years 17.3 per cent. For the same periods the estimated growth of the adult population of the United States has been 19.0 and 17.2 per cent respectively. Thus it becomes clear that since 1906 the increases in the membership figures reported by the churches have kept pace almost exactly with the growth of population.

The reason why certain people have jumped to the conclusion that church-membership has been increasing in America much more rapidly than the population is that a number of denominations, notably the Jewish Congregations, the Christian Reformed Church, the Protestant Episcopal Church, and the twenty-one Lutheran bodies, have recently adopted more inclusive definitions of "a member." Naturally, if no adjustment is made in the total membership figures

<sup>\*</sup> Department of Commerce, Bureau of Census, *Religious Bodies, 1916*, pp. 24-30, and *ibid.*, 1926, vol. 1, pp. 13-16, 82, 276.

reported by these denominations, one will inevitably overestimate their rate of growth. The figures here used, however, have been carefully corrected to allow for these changes in definition.<sup>4</sup>

The comparative data for 1890, 1906, and 1916, presented in Table 98, show a gain in church membership in cities with a population of 25,000 and over. The smaller towns and the open

TABLE 98—SHOWING MEMBERSHIP IN CITY AND NON-CITY POPULATIONS

Group	1890		1906		1916	
	In Cities of 25,000 Population and Over	Outside of These Principal Cities	In Cities of 25,000 Population and Over	Outside of These Principal Cities	In Cities of 25,000 Population and Over	Outside of These Principal Cities
Per cent of national population	22.2	77.8	27.5	72.5	32.7	67.3
Per cent of national church membership	26.9	73.1	32.7	67.3	36.5	63.5
Excess or deficiency of church percentage to population percentage	3.3	-4.7	5.2	-5.2	3.8	-3.8

country lost in these periods in relation to their population, and additional data, presented from a different angle, indicate that the open country suffered the major portion of this loss. The 1926 data showed that the percentage of the rural adult population belonging to churches was smaller than that in either large or medium-sized cities, or small towns.

In 1912 Gill made a careful study of church membership in Winsor and Tompkins Counties, New York, covering a period of twenty years. Both counties are dominantly agricultural, with the exception of the city of Ithaca in Tompkins County. His study showed an increase in church membership, during the twenty years, of only 4.28 per cent in Winsor County, and only 2.0 per cent in Tompkins County.<sup>5</sup> The total increase in church membership for the country as a whole was 93.2 per cent in the sixteen-year period covered by the census, and 37.1 per cent for cities of 25,000 population and over.

The data from a number of scattered surveys of rural churches

<sup>4</sup> Fry, C. Luther, *The U. S. Looks at Its Churches*, Institute of Social and Religious Research, New York, 1930, p. 49.

<sup>5</sup> Gill, C. O., and Pinchot, G., *The Country Church*, The Macmillan Company, New York, 1913, pp. 73, 154.

in this country show an even greater deficiency in rural church membership than the Bureau of the Census reports,<sup>6</sup> and some of these surveys have made a detailed study of the membership loss. Thus it was found that country churches gained more members through accession than city churches did, but that the latter gained more through letters and statements from other churches. On the other hand, rural churches lost members by letters and because they stopped attending church; death was responsible for the major portion of the loss of membership in village churches. It is thus apparent that open-country churches lose members for two reasons. (1) their members transfer to village churches, and (2) they fail to keep their membership active. These surveys also showed that young people constitute only a small percentage of country church membership.

In addition to contributing more detailed and more trustworthy data on the growth and decline of churches, the Town and Country Survey referred to above attempted to diagnose the causes. Data were given for 179 counties in every section of the country, 25 of which, including about 900 representative churches, were intensively analyzed. Communities were classified on the following basis: *city*, any place over 5000 population, *town*, from 2500-5000, *village* or *hamlet*, 25-2500, and *open country*, under 25. These data indicated growth in church membership for 88 per cent of all the town churches, in 63 per cent of village, and in 47 per cent of the hamlet churches. The location of country churches is a factor in this, for the survey found that 55 per cent of the country churches more than two miles away from a town were growing, but that 37 per cent of those within two miles of a town were either stationary or losing members.<sup>7</sup> It was only in the far west that as many as two-thirds of the country churches were growing.<sup>8</sup>

**Rural Church Attendance.**—Many people are enrolled in rural churches, as in other churches, who are in no sense active members, and consequently attendance is often far below what the membership figures would indicate. After surveying over 6000 rural churches in Ohio, Gill selected five at random, and found

<sup>6</sup> Surveys made by the Presbyterian Board of Home Missions, the Ohio Rural Life Survey, Iowa State University, and a number of other studies may be consulted for proof of this statement.

<sup>7</sup> Morse, H. N., and Brunner, E. deS., *op cit.*, pp. 96, 97.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 98.

that the attendance constituted only 25.7 per cent of the certified membership. His data for these five churches are shown in Table 99.

TABLE 99—ATTENDANCE OF RURAL CHURCHES OF DIFFERENT SIZES\*

Members	Average Attendance
125	34
300	136
173	30-40
150	Less than 30
300	40
1048	270

Other studies show the same results in this respect. Attendance in Randolph County, Missouri, constituted 61 per cent of the church membership, and about 8 per cent of the population.<sup>10</sup> Although the church attendance in Pend Oreille County, Washington, was over 100 per cent of the membership, it was less than 18 per cent of the population.<sup>11</sup>

The rural church, in the majority of cases, is not attracting rural people sufficiently to keep them active members. A study made in McDonald County, Missouri, showed that about 15 per cent of the church membership was non-resident, and 36 per cent of the resident members were inactive; thus only 48 per cent of the actual membership was active.<sup>12</sup>

**The Abandonment of Rural Churches.**—There is undoubtedly nothing more indicative of failure than for an institution to close its doors. If a church is closed because its membership has transferred to another congregation, there is no tragedy in the closing; but if it means the loss of active church members or the death of institutional religion in the community, there is real tragedy.

The Town and Country Survey found that, within the last ten years, 142 churches had been abandoned in the 25 counties it studied. Bricker estimated that in 1919 there were 21,000 closed

\* Gill, C. O., and Pinchot, G., *op cit*, p. 9.

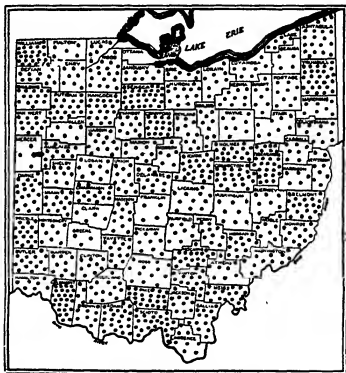
<sup>10</sup> Jones, A. J., Master's thesis (unpublished), University of Missouri, 1920.

<sup>11</sup> Brunner, E. deS., *A Church and Community Survey of Pend Oreille County, Washington*, Doubleday, Doran & Company, Inc., New York, 1922.

<sup>12</sup> Collings, P., Master's thesis (unpublished), University of Missouri, 1918.



or abandoned rural churches in this country.<sup>13</sup> The Presbyterian Church, in its survey of rural Illinois, estimated that in the same year there were 1600 abandoned churches in the state, exclusive of the city of Chicago, and it stated further that, as a result, many communities were left without any church.<sup>14</sup> While these



E 8—1058 ABANDONED RURAL CHURCH

(From Lively, C E, "Some Rural Social Agencies in Ohio," *Bulletin of Ohio State University, Agricultural Extension Service*, Columbus, 1922-1923, p 17.)

are only estimates, the indication is that, regardless of whether abandoned churches number 5000 or 25,000, either a reorganization of congregations or a loss in membership is occurring

<sup>13</sup> Bricker, G A., *The Church in Rural America*, The Standard Press, Cincinnati, 1919, p 41

<sup>14</sup> *A Rural Survey in Illinois*, Department of Church and Country Life, Board of Home Missions, Presbyterian Church in the United States, 156 Fifth Avenue, New York.

Gill located 429 closed or abandoned churches on the county map of Ohio. There was only one of the 87 counties in which one or more rural churches was not closed or completely abandoned, in each of 16 counties, there were 10 or more such churches, and in 2 counties there were 25 and 23, respectively. Within a 3-mile radius in one section, there were 7 abandoned churches, and in each of several townships, four or five. Further information on this is presented in the accompanying map, taken from another study.

Practically every rural survey in this country has shown closed and abandoned churches, and a study of the information in these surveys makes possible the assertion that, except in the south, abandonment has a somewhat direct relation to the age of the settlement. According to all indications, the pioneer and the succeeding generation build numerous rural churches, but many of them fall into disuse by the time of the third or fourth generation. Abandonment is slight in the west, but very marked in the middle west. The author knows of numerous rural churches in the middle west which have been in existence for three generations and which are now gradually disintegrating. He has seen dozens of church sites on which nothing of value remains except the graveyards. Some of these churches were built two generations ago, they were thriving and serving the community in the generation just passed, today they are dead. An exception to this general tendency is seen in the fact that the rural churches in the Piedmont and Coastal Plain sections of the south are not being closed or abandoned to any extent, although the settlements in these districts are old.

If this tendency were common to all church life and organization, it could be considered a characteristic of institutionalized religion, but it is evident only in the open country and small towns. The abandonment of a few rural churches may not be disturbing in itself, but if 25 churches are abandoned in one county, and 500 or 600 in one state, and if the tendency becomes universal for the country as a whole, it is a certain indication of confusion among rural churches, if not of the actual disintegration of religion itself.

#### WEAKNESSES OF THE RURAL CHURCH

The greatest weaknesses of the rural church, in the order of their importance, are probably: (1) sectarianism or denomina-

tionalism; (2) poorly trained preachers; (3) poor church programs; (4) poor church equipment, (5) non-resident preachers, (6) poor financial support, and (7) small membership and poor attendance, the inevitable result of the preceding six factors.

**Sectarianism.**—The presence, in one community, of half a dozen different groups of adherents of any one institution would destroy that institution's efficiency, and to this the church is no exception. Nevertheless, there are probably over 220 different denominations in this country,<sup>15</sup> for the 1926 census report on religious bodies lists 213 denominations, exclusive of Buddhism, Mohammedanism, and other oriental religions; ten denominations which were listed in the 1916 report are omitted from the later one. The 1920 *Year Book of the Churches* lists 204 sects and denominations in this country;<sup>16</sup> and in the single state of Ohio, Gill found 61 different sects and denominations, and an average of 5 rural churches per township. He found further that 66 per cent of these churches had 100 members or less, 55 per cent had 75 members or less, and 37 per cent had 50 members or less.

The school has learned the tragic results of division into small units, and is hastening to reorganize so that its program may be more efficiently carried forth in larger units; but there is little evidence that the church has made the slightest attempt even to analyze its major weakness. People who are learning to cooperate efficiently on other rural programs are handicapping their religious programs with silly sentimental ideas about sectarianism. Sectarianism results directly in the division and dissipation of the church's program for the community, and this in turn often leads to actual conflict between the congregations of the various denominations. It is likewise responsible for the failure to provide churches with an adequate membership, sufficient financial support, and resident pastors. Surveys from all over the country have shown that the prosperity of the church is in direct ratio to the adequacy and efficiency of its pastoral care.

The Ohio Rural Life Survey showed that churches failed to prosper if they had less than 100 members, a fact which has been substantiated by other later surveys covering other sections of the country. While Morse and Brunner do not go so far as to say that

<sup>15</sup> Bureau of the Census, *Religious Bodies, 1926*, vol. i, pp. 7-12.

<sup>16</sup> Warburton, S. R., *Year Book of the Churches*, Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America, New York, 1920.

the size of membership is a decisive factor, they do make this assertion "The various regional volumes in this series [referring to special studies from which their study generalizes] have shown with surprising consistency that the small church, judged on the basis of one year's accomplishment, is not a going concern. Of all the churches with fewer than fifty members, only one-third are growing. Of all those with more than fifty members, about 70 per cent are growing."<sup>17</sup> According to them, "One church for 1000 people is regarded as a norm." Of the 179 counties covered in their study, 146 have more churches than the norm requires.<sup>18</sup> Furthermore, they show that the home mission boards of most denominations encourage uncalled-for competition among local churches. They state, further, "Only thirty-four out of 211 aided churches are entirely free from competition," and that "One hundred and forty-nine of the 211 aided churches in these counties could be dispensed with without essential loss."<sup>19</sup> Innumerable rural families are driving farther—sometimes five or eight miles farther—to attend their own denominational church than would be necessary to reach a centrally located church if sectarianism were not so rampant. This overchurching of rural communities because of sectarian zeal is not only futile, but criminal, in any attempt at church efficiency.

Ormond describes the situation in North Carolina as follows: "For approximately every nine square miles of territory, there is a country church for white people outside towns of 1500 or more population. If the country churches were evenly distributed over the land area, every country church for white people would be just three miles from four other such churches."<sup>20</sup>

If, in either Ohio or North Carolina, there were only 1200 instead of the present 6000 rural churches, the membership remaining the same, there would still be an average of one church per township, and the average membership of each church would be five times as large as it is now. The average township is not too large an area to be served by one church, for thousands of schools are being consolidated in areas of this size. But the very nature of the church at present precludes any such consolidation, for

<sup>17</sup> Morse, H. N., and Brunner, E. deS., *op. cit.*, pp. 101-102.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 73.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 122.

<sup>20</sup> Ormond, J. M., *op. cit.*, p. 340.

nothing so emphatically dictates the distribution of rural churches, with the consequent dissipation of their activities, as sectarianism. The consolidation of churches is equally advantageous in the case of the salaries of ministers, the work of Sunday school leaders, and the improvement of church equipment.<sup>21</sup>

**Poorly Trained Preachers.**—The fact that rural ministers are poorly equipped for their work cannot be overlooked for, in the majority of cases, they are either young ministers serving their apprenticeship in rural churches in anticipation of better positions in the city, or old preachers no longer able to meet the demands of up-to-date city churches. It is inevitable that the city church, with its higher salary, larger congregation, and more adequate equipment, should attract the best ministers, and that the rural church, because of its low salaries, should get more than its share of the poorly trained preachers. Comparatively few men prepare for the rural ministry as their life work; furthermore, few preacher-training institutions have until recently offered such specialized training. The church as a whole probably has a more poorly equipped leadership than any other of our great social institutions; and the leadership of the rural church is without doubt poorer than that of any other churches.

In their Oklahoma study, Page and La Camp found that 11.1 per cent of the ministers in the open country, hamlets and villages had only grade school training, and that 23.6 per cent had not gone beyond high school. Among the open-country ministers alone, these figures were 38.0 and 48.3 per cent, respectively.<sup>22</sup> But the training of country ministers varies between two extremes. Gill states that they are sometimes actually illiterate, on the other hand, some denominations require seminary training even beyond the A B degree, and others require their ministers to take training courses while actually in charge of a church. Fairly good conditions were found by a study made in Virginia,<sup>23</sup> for 59 per cent of the rural ministers included in this study had spent four or more years in college, and 53 per cent had completed three or more years of theological seminary work, some of which, how-

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 340

<sup>22</sup> Page, J. F., and La Camp, I. R., "The Oklahoma Rural Church," *Research Bulletin* 84, Agricultural Experiment Station, Stillwater, 1930

<sup>23</sup> Hamilton, C. H., and Garnett, W. E., "The Role of the Church in Rural Community Life in Virginia," *Bulletin* 267, Virginia Agricultural Experiment Station, Blacksburg, June, 1929, pp. 110-122

ever, was undergraduate. The most complete data on this are found in the 1926 census report on religious bodies, and in summarizing them, Fry says:

Of the 25,000 city ministers among the seventeen white Protestant bodies, only 20 per cent reported that they were not graduates of either college or seminary, while more than half—52 per cent—claimed to be graduates of both. In rural areas, however, these proportions are virtually reversed. Returns from 46,000 Protestant country pastors show that only 23 per cent were graduates of both college and seminary, and that more than half—53 per cent—were not graduates of either.

For the three Negro bodies, the returns show that 62 per cent of the urban, and 83 per cent of the rural, ministers were non-graduates. In so far, therefore, as academic training is a valuable preparation for the work of the ministry, the Protestant rural church is laboring under a decided handicap when compared with the urban church. This conclusion, however, does not hold for the Roman Catholic Church. Returns from more than 5000 rural priests show that only 74 per cent reported themselves as non-graduates, compared with 60 per cent for city priests.

In this connection it should be pointed out that the Roman Catholic Church has relatively fewer rural ministers than most other denominations have. Only 45 per cent of all Catholic priests were classed as rural, compared with 65 per cent among the seventeen white Protestant denominations, and 74 per cent among the three Negro bodies.<sup>24</sup>

Denominational colleges provide the training for the great majority of preachers. These colleges are generally small, poorly supported, and poorly equipped, and their faculty is so small that the teachers are unable to do their best work because of their heavy teaching schedules. Furthermore, the curricula do not prepare men adequately for the rural ministry, for there are too many courses in homiletics, hermeneutics, exegesis, church history and systematic theology, and too few in the social sciences, psychology and science—agriculture in particular. A preacher who has not through his training gained a fairly thorough appreciation of the problems of agriculture cannot expect to have his farmer parishioners consult him on their economic and social problems.

In the past, the rural minister was the best educated man in the community, and his congregation deferred to his judgment on

<sup>24</sup> Fry, *C. Luther, op cit*, pp. 64, 66.

civic, economic, and social matters. But this is often not the case today, for the modern means for enlightening farmers have made many rural dwellers more intelligent on the problems of the modern world than are rural preachers. Because of this, a rural congregation is no longer willing to listen to a discussion of threadbare theological subjects or to someone whose judgment they cannot trust. The rural preacher constitutes one of the weak spots in the rural church because he is unable to exercise the intellectual leadership expected of him. Lack of training underlies this weakness, and the following chapter will show some of the outstanding attempts now being made to remedy this condition.

**Poor Church Programs.**—A city church usually offers numerous programs—recreational, social, civic and educational—and, in addition, charity and social work, Sunday school, clubs for men and women, young people's auxiliaries, etc.; but with the exception of Sunday school and occasional young people's "societies," these are almost always lacking in the rural church. The programs of rural churches are weak, for no institutional program can be adequate without skilled and constant leadership, and most of the rural churches in this country lack leaders. Gill found that 4007 rural churches in Ohio were without resident ministers, and that there were 1599 churches which commanded one-fourth or less of a minister's preaching time; these data could be duplicated in almost every other state. Preaching is the most important feature of the program of the rural church, but in spite of this fact, 84 per cent of the rural churches do not have preaching every Sunday in the month. Table 100 gives data on this point for Ohio, and from these and other data, it is apparent that the rural program is largely one of quarter- or half-time preaching.

Few of the auxiliary organizations of the average city church are found in the rural church. As a rule, the church building stands idle six days out of the week, and, in many weeks, the entire seven days. Only one country church in McDonald County, Missouri, had a young people's organization, only one had a ladies' aid society, and none had a missionary society. In thousands of rural churches the Sunday school is in session only a part of the year.

A number of rural surveys have analyzed church programs, and the following data on Sunday school attendance are taken from some of these studies. In Boone County, Missouri, although

TABLE 100.—PREACHING PROGRAM OF 6060 RURAL CHURCHES IN OHIO<sup>26</sup>

	Number	Per Cent
With resident minister	2053	33 8
Without resident minister	4007	66 2
With full-time minister	982	16 2
With one-half-time minister	1581	26 0
With one-third-time minister	1125	18 5
With one-quarter-time minister	970	16 0
With less than one-quarter-time minister	629	10 7
With no regular service of minister	721	11 9
Without data available	52	8
Total	6060	100 0

74 per cent of the population in the area surveyed attended church more or less regularly, only 34 per cent attended Sunday school<sup>26</sup> In the Sikeston Community in Missouri, 45 per cent of the rural population attended church, and 36 per cent attended Sunday school<sup>27</sup> Morse and Brunner show that the average Sunday school attendance for the country church is higher than that for the village church, although the village Sunday school enrollment is larger than that of the country Sunday school They show further that in "both physical and pedagogical equipment the rural Sunday schools are woefully lacking", that "only 80 per cent of the Sunday schools are on the job every Sunday out of fifty-two", that "less than one school in eleven has a teacher-training class of even the most elementary character", that "only 30 per cent of the schools use graded lessons"; that "barely half the church schools obtain the regular attendance of their ministers," and that "the teachers are for the most part untrained"<sup>28</sup>

The annual revival, the purpose of which is to solicit new members for the church, is usually a part of the program of the average rural church These revivals are universal and, although they usually do secure new members, they are generally futile, for the membership dwindles and church doors close, even in the face of so-called successful revivals A small village in Tompkins County,

<sup>26</sup> Gill, C O, and Pinchot, G, *Six Thousand Country Churches*, The Macmillan Company, New York, 1920, pp 125-127

<sup>27</sup> Taylor, Carl C., *A Social Survey of the Columbia Trade Area, Boone County, Missouri* (unpublished)

<sup>28</sup> Taylor, Carl C., Yoder, F R, and Zimmerman, C. C., *op cit*

<sup>29</sup> Morse, H N, and Brunner, E deS, *op cit*, chap vii



New York, provides a good illustration. A revival held there by several churches in 1890 produced 200 converts, but only one of these ultimately became an active church member, and the churches themselves have been struggling ever since. Gill says that it is evident that this revival proved a lasting injury to these churches.<sup>29</sup>

The following quotation gives a good summary of the weakness of the revival as a part of the church program

For the most part, the farm people of these eighteen counties [Ohio] are very religious. This is attested not merely by the large number of churches, but also by revival services, held in the winter. (In Pike County, for example, no less than 1500 revival services were held in thirty years, or an average of fifty each year.) Yet the moral, wholesome religion, bearing as its fruit better living and all-round human development, and cherished and propagated by sane and sober-minded people, is rarely known. The main function of the church, according to the popular conception, is to hold these protracted meetings, to stir up religious emotion, and, under this influence, to bring to pass certain psychological experiences. No man is held to be religious or saved from evil destiny unless he has had such experiences. It becomes, therefore, the business of the preacher of the church to create conditions favorable to experiencing these emotions.<sup>30</sup>

The author knows of several rural churches which hold annual revivals and spend from \$100 to \$200 on these "protracted meetings," but which are unable to support a preaching program one quarter of the time for nine months of the year. There is the case of one rural church in Iowa which, although it gained 65 converts from a revival, was closed immediately afterward, remaining closed, except for funerals, for six months. A farmer who was plowing a field next to this church said that such revivals were held at least every two years, but that the church membership numbered about 35. The overemphasis of the preaching phase of the program of the rural church is the cause of the widespread annual revival in country churches.

**Poor Church Equipment.**—The physical equipment of the rural church is almost always poor; even the live wide-awake churches whose buildings and equipment are a subject of pride to

<sup>29</sup> Gill, C. O., and Pinchot, G., *The Country Church*, pp. 43-44.

<sup>30</sup> Gill, C. O., and Pinchot, G., *Six Thousand Country Churches*, p. 21.

the community have to acknowledge their deficiencies in this respect, in comparison with a modern city church. Rural church buildings, like every other building, have to face the tragedy of being sound physically long after they cease to be adequate to meet the needs of new programs

Most rural churches are one-room buildings, equipped only for preaching services. The consequent lack of space for classrooms precludes an efficient Sunday school, and the lack of adequate auditorium space means that no social or recreational programs are possible. The church is often heated so poorly that its program is seriously handicapped—sometimes eliminated completely—during the winter. The walls, windows, floor, seats and pulpit are usually anything but pleasing to the eye. The churches are so little used, the membership is so small, and the financial support is so meager that the equipment is often in a state of decay, and the building and the equipment are almost always below the standard of the homes in the community.

The following data are representative of rural church equipment. In Green and Clermont Counties, Ohio, 61 per cent of the churches are wooden structures, and 50 per cent have only one room, 55 per cent of the churches in Montgomery County, Maryland, have only one room. All the churches in Randolph County, Missouri, are one-room, and 89 per cent are wooden. In Sedgwick County, Kansas, 62 per cent of the churches are one-room, and the average value of the open-country churches is \$2680, while in southwestern Ohio nearly one-half of the 378 churches studied are valued at less than \$1000 each, all of them are one-room, 90 per cent are heated with stoves, 71 per cent are lighted by oil lamps, and only 3 per cent have horse sheds. Morse and Brunner draw the following conclusions from this: "Three-fourths of the churches are one- or two-room buildings of unattractive and nearly uniform design. Church work can be successful in such buildings, but churches with three rooms or more make proportionally from 50 to 300 per cent better records through various features of the church program, especially in relation to religious education."<sup>21</sup>

Fry presents data on the comparative value of urban and rural church edifices, per adult member, for the nine geographic di-

<sup>21</sup> Morse, H. N., and Brunner, E. deS., *op cit.*, p. 147

## 462 THE PROBLEM OF THE RURAL CHURCH

visions of the United States. From these figures, which appear in Table 101, it is apparent that the urban value exceeds the rural in every section except New England, varying from a comparatively slight difference in the Middle Atlantic states to a very great difference in the South Atlantic, East South Central, and West South Central states

TABLE 101 —URBAN AND RURAL CHURCH EDIFICE VALUE, PER ADULT MEMBER, BY DIVISIONS, 1926<sup>22</sup>

	Urban	Rural
New England	\$ 90	\$ 90
Middle Atlantic	112	104
East North Central	105	76
West North Central	103	67
South Atlantic	124	41
East South Central	99	29
West South Central	86	31
Mountain	73	39
Pacific	100	65

**Non-Resident Preachers.**—The majority of rural churches are served by absentee ministers, and for this reason their pastoral and visitation programs are weak. Gill found that the farmers' families in one township in Ohio had not been called on once in five years; there was one woman upon whom no minister had called in twelve years, but who joined the church as soon as the minister did call on her, a family in another township had not been called on in twenty-five years. But it is unreasonable to expect ministers who are in a community for only one or two preaching services each month to do efficient work in the community.

The two following cases, taken from A. W. Taylor's study of the pastoral organization of rural churches in Missouri, are typical. In one case, there were four denominational churches in the community, but no resident pastor. Each church had quarter-time preaching, one minister coming twenty-four miles, one twenty-five miles, one thirty miles, and one forty miles, to meet these engagements. In another case, four churches were served by one

<sup>22</sup> Fry, C. Luther, *op cit*, p. 79.

preacher who lived at some distance from them, he traveled fifteen miles to one church, thirty-seven to another, fifty to another, and sixty to the other<sup>33</sup> The question asked in such cases is "Where is his pastorate?" for often the minister arrives just in time for the morning service and leaves immediately after the evening service

The author knows of student preachers who traveled over 200 miles to meet Sunday engagements in rural churches, and of other men who have spent their lives as "railroad" preachers, never holding a definite pastorate; he knows dozens of rural ministers who work six days a week at some other occupation and travel to a distant rural church to preach on Sunday. Ormond found that on some circuits in North Carolina there are as many as eight churches under the leadership of one minister, and that the average membership in the circuits of the Methodist Episcopal Church South is 451<sup>34</sup> No institution can be expected to prosper with such spasmodic and ineffective leadership

The Ohio Rural Life Survey showed that there is a direct relation between church growth and absentee ministers, for it found that church growth was present in only 11 per cent of the churches without ministers, in 26 per cent with non-resident ministers, and in 51 per cent with resident ministers. It showed also a direct relation between church growth and preaching, for 47 per cent were growing where there was full-time preaching, 27 per cent where there was half-time preaching, and 21 per cent where there was quarter-time preaching; only 4 per cent of the churches studied had full-time preaching The map on page 464 gives further information on non-resident pastors for the counties in Ohio The effect of these conditions on church efficiency is obvious For example, Gill's study shows a clear correlation between rural morality and resident pastors, data on this will be presented in the following chapter

The extremely short terms of rural pastorates present another weakness in rural church organization In one of the largest denominations in Ohio, 48 per cent of the ministers had been there only one or two years, only 26 per cent having as much as two

<sup>33</sup> Taylor, A. W., *The Disciples of Christ in Missouri*, The Commission of Social Service and the Rural Church of the Disciples of Christ, Indianapolis, 1915

<sup>34</sup> Ormond, J. M., *op. cit.*, p. 341.

years' acquaintance with their pastorates; and only about 1 per cent had served as long as five years. These data are typical of the findings of all rural church surveys on this point.

According to Morse and Brunner, "Out of every ten town and country churches, there are only three which do not have to share their pastors with other churches, and half of these have to share

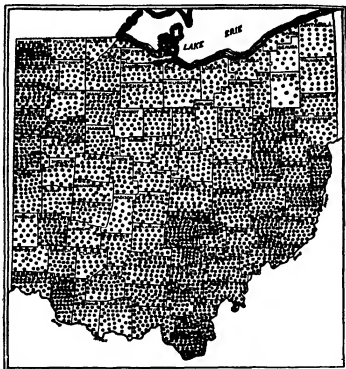


FIGURE 9—DISTRIBUTION OF 3291 RURAL CHURCHES IN OHIO WITH NON-RESIDENT PASTORS

(Lively, E C, *op cit*, p 17)

them with other occupations. Thus only 15 per cent of all town and country churches have full-time resident pastors. Twenty-six per cent of the churches are on two-point circuits, 19 per cent on three-point circuits, and 25 per cent on circuits of four points or more."<sup>85</sup> They give the following significant figures. Only 16 per

<sup>85</sup> Morse, H N, and Brunner, E. deS, *op cit*, pp. 41-42

cent of the country churches have either full- or part-time resident pastors, 52.6 per cent of all town and country churches have non-resident ministers, and 11.9 per cent have no ministers, church growth is about 50 per cent greater in the churches whose pastors serve only one church and follow no other occupation but the ministry, than in those whose pastors divide their attention between two or more churches or occupations, more than two-thirds of the churches showing gains in membership have resident ministers. They conclude their discussion of this issue with the statement: "What is obviously lacking in most country churches is the minister who actually belongs to his community, who lives in it, who speaks its language and who is especially trained to work according to its exact needs. Long-distance ministering is inadequate ministering, and in the long run unsuccessful ministering."<sup>86</sup>

**Poor Financial Support.**—The rural church is poorly supported financially. This must not be taken to imply that its members do not pay well for what they receive from it, or that the ratio of their financial support is not just as great per capita as that of the members of city churches. But the fact remains that, per church organization, the rural church is inadequately supported, and consequently the value of its physical equipment is low, its ministers are poorly paid, and its support of preaching programs is meager.

In 1926 the expenditures of all the churches that reported in the special census study averaged \$18.44 for each member 13 years of age and over, and the contribution per adult member was \$13.27, as against \$21.50 for the urban member.<sup>87</sup> The average rural church in Pend Oreille County, Washington, raised only \$311 annually, as against \$1258.71 raised by the average village church, but the disbursements per rural church member were almost 50 per cent greater than those per village church member.<sup>88</sup>

The rural minister is poorly paid. As has already been said, he usually does not represent the best-trained and most experienced of his profession, and his program, which as a rule includes from one to as many as seven churches, makes it impossible for him to

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 101.

<sup>87</sup> Bureau of the Census, *Religious Bodies*, 1926, pp. 92, 94.

<sup>88</sup> Brunner, E. deS., *A Church and Community Survey of Pend Oreille County, Washington*, pp. 37-38.

render any valuable service to any one church. Gill's Ohio study showed that 688 pastors of rural churches in that state received an average annual salary of \$993 in 1917; this figure for 188 pastors of the United Brethren Church was \$787.<sup>30</sup> This is a poor financial return for ministers, but it does not prove that the rural church member is failing to contribute his share to the propagation of religion, but rather that the church organization, because of sectarianism, is failing to provide adequate support for the minister in about the same degree that it is failing to perform the whole task of institutionalized religion. A careful study of the data in several rural surveys justifies the assertion that the farmer is willing to give adequate financial support to an efficient church program, and that whenever his support falls short, it is because his church does not justify more adequate support, for the support per member tends to maintain a direct ratio to the services rendered by the church.

**Small Membership and Poor Attendance.**—The weakness inherent in poor rural church membership and attendance has already been discussed at some length in preceding paragraphs, and it is not difficult to prove that low membership and poor attendance are not causes, but direct results, of the other weaknesses in the rural church. Rural churches do not suddenly disintegrate. One church is usually built in a new or pioneer community, and it receives fairly adequate support from a large portion of the community. Because of this support, and also because of the zeal of other sects, other churches are soon erected, with a consequent division of support and membership, competition arises, and sometimes even denominational strife ensues. Those who belong to no church but who would willingly have supported and attended the one church in the community refuse to participate in the factional struggle, the supporters of the denominational churches become discouraged by the weakened program of their own church and the resulting fewer meetings. Not only do the membership and attendance of the individual churches fall off, but in some cases church membership and attendance in the community as a whole decline. It is not the churches in the pioneer sections of the country that are losing members or disintegrating, for as a rule these sections are not overchurched, it is the church offering

<sup>30</sup> Gill, C. O., and Pinchot, G., *Six Thousand Country Churches*, p. 122.

a part-time preaching program and whose membership is poor that has poor attendance and poor support per member

The work of Morse and Brunner, from which we have quoted so extensively in this chapter, is an interpretation of about a dozen special and regional studies covering every aspect of the rural church situation in every section of the country, and their summary of their chapter, "The General Status of the Church Enterprise," is presented as a conclusion to the problem of the rural church. It is as follows

The data for this chapter are drawn from 179 counties with 5552 churches and 3353 ministers

There is an average of one church for every 463 inhabitants. The ratio varies by counties from one church for every 163 people to one church for 11,089

By regions, the South has most churches proportionately, and the Range the fewest

One church for 1000 people is regarded as the norm. Only six counties out of 179 approximate this norm

Sixty per cent of the counties have twice as many churches, and 15 per cent have four times as many churches, as the standard calls for

One-fifth of the communities, containing one-thirteenth of the population, have no churches

There is one minister for every 1.7 churches and for every 767 people.

The supply of ministers is relatively greater in proportion to the number of churches as the supply of churches in proportion to population diminishes.

Sixteen and five-tenths per cent of all churches have full-time resident ministers, 52.6 per cent have non-resident ministers, 11.9 per cent have no ministers

The fewer churches there are in proportion to population, the larger the proportion of them that have resident pastors and the larger the proportion of those that have no ministers at all

The town church has an advantage over the village church, and both of these over the country church, in the matter of resident pastors

Sixty-eight per cent of the town churches have ministers who serve one church only, as compared with 43 per cent of village churches and 19 per cent of the country churches

One-third of all ministers combine some other occupation with the



## 468 THE PROBLEM OF THE RURAL CHURCH

work of the ministry In the South and the Southwest, the proportion is nearly one-half.

Fifty-five per cent of the ministers serve each two churches or more

Only one community in five has a full-time resident minister.

Church membership is 20 per cent of the total population

Town churches average 194 members, village churches, 108, country churches, 72

Twenty-seven and five-tenths per cent of the total membership is either non-resident or inactive

By counties the proportions of the population in the church membership vary from 0.4 per cent to 57.6 per cent, by region from 6.6 per cent to 28.3 per cent.

The town and village population is more thoroughly evangelized than the country population, taken as a whole

The greater the number of churches and ministers in proportion to population, the higher the proportion of the population in the church membership

Any unusual racial, physical or economic situation is apt to reduce the degree of evangelization

The church does not reach the farm tenants as well as it reaches the farm owners The higher the percentage of tenantry, the greater the discrepancy between the two groups in respect to church membership

The average church parish includes twenty square miles The average is largest for denominations that use a foreign language or that proclaim some peculiar dogma

This chapter has been a portrayal of facts which constitute a very small portion of the information now available on the rural church situation in the various sections of the nation These facts show the church to be actually decadent in some areas of the country. That church divisions and ill-equipped ministers are the two chief causes of the decadence we do not hesitate to assert Since these two chief causes are items over which the country man himself has little control, the situation is not bright for the country church There is a way out, however. The rural necessity for union and cooperation of forces, for unfettered and clear-visioned leadership will ultimately do for the rural religious situation what it has largely done for the religious program of foreign missionary work, *viz.*, force church leaders and church schools and church dogmas to yield a wholesome life in the communities where rural churches are located. . . .<sup>40</sup>

<sup>40</sup> Morse, H. N., and Brunner, E. deS., *op cit.*, pp. 73-74.

## QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

- 1 What is meant by the statement, "The rural church is a social institution"?
- 2 Why do so many rural churches disintegrate?
- 3 Do you think the rural church will become extinct? Give reasons for your answer
- 4 Why are churches not consolidated as schools are?
- 5 Is there any difference between sectarianism and denominationalism?
- 6 Why are rural ministers generally more poorly trained than any others?
- 7 How can it be made possible for rural churches to have resident pastors?
- 8 Comment on the statement, "Rural churches have as good programs as they pay for"
- 9 What do you think would be the result if all the rural churches were abandoned?
- 10 Discuss the feasibility of all the country people attending churches in towns, since there are now automobiles and good roads

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## 470 THE PROBLEM OF THE RURAL CHURCH

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## CHAPTER XX

### AN ADEQUATE RURAL RELIGIOUS PROGRAM

#### THE RÔLE OF THE RURAL CHURCH

**The Church Must Teach and Develop Ideals in Rural Life.**—The stabilizing and sometimes stultifying tendencies in rural life and thought, which have been discussed elsewhere in this book, lead to the absence of idealism among rural people. Poetry, art, and literature are sadly lacking, and the sentimental is almost universally decried. Close contact with the stern forces of nature and the pressure of occupational habits stifle many ideals. For all these reasons, it is difficult to arouse farm people to the point of rallying to civic causes and fighting the battles of social progress.

The most important work of religion—and of the church—is to develop aspirations, to expand individual emotions into altruistic impulses, and to teach people to measure what is by what it should be. The restriction of preaching to individual salvation alone, the insistence on denominational creeds, and the encouragement of an undying loyalty to sectarian beliefs and dogmas have not only kept the rural church from prospering, but precluded to rural people many of the ideals held by other groups of our population and by some rural civilizations of the past. Religion is almost automatically propagandic, promotional and predictive by nature. The religion taught by the rural church must no longer be robbed of its birthright. Instead of thinking of religion and the church only as restrictive to living, rural people should be helped to a richer life by a religion and a church that expand their understanding, appreciation, and vision of life.

**The Church Must Be a Leader in Morals and Ethics.**—The morality of rural people is not low, on the contrary, it is extremely high, no departure from the rural community's stern moral code being tolerated. Rural life is not one of change, and the farmer is just as slow in altering his ideas on right and wrong as he is his ideas on other things. All this makes for the rule of

custom, and each new generation and each newcomer into the community unconsciously falls in line with the accustomed ways of thinking and doing (Incidentally, it is probably the farmer's faith in the integrity of others which is partially the reason for his being swindled so easily ) The impersonal relationships common in urban life are unknown to rural people, for in the country everyone is a member of a relatively small community Any delinquency is marked, the community usually knows about anyone who is habitually dishonest or untruthful, and a wild boy or girl becomes the subject of neighborhood gossip The family, in the old-fashioned sense, is still a reality in the open country, there are few rural parents who do not know definitely where their children are during the evenings or on Sunday A rural community lives within itself to a much greater extent than an urban, and it is therefore vitally concerned about its integrity.

Rural life may be more static and less complex than urban life, but it experiences every human relationship known to man—the righteousness which inheres in good relationships, and the sin in wrong ones Every element in the standard of living for which people strive is found in rural life, as is each of the great social institutions If, in pursuing a standard of living, people go counter to rural custom, they are unethical or immoral, if they build poor social institutions, refuse to support them, or fail to give the proper emphasis to the institutionalized phases of their life, they are poor citizens The church has here a great opportunity to teach and develop ethical and moral judgment on such matters

Farmers are at present developing all kinds of new business relationships and contacts through their various organizations—the general farm organizations and the commodity cooperative marketing movements in particular—and they need to think of these new contacts and movements in other ways than as purely revolutionary ideas or as a means for economic gain Furthermore, the farmer is rapidly coming into his own politically and, like everyone else, he needs ethical leadership in the exercise of his citizenship and political power The church should supply this leadership in both economics and politics

The rural community must face the problems arising from the relationships of people of different economic and social status and of different ages and sexes Business and recreational relationships, as well as many others, likewise create problems These

various problems will no more solve themselves in a rural community than they will anywhere else, and no "other-worldly" religion can dispose of them satisfactorily. Here again a dynamic moral and ethical leadership is necessary

That the rural church fails in many cases to furnish this leadership can be easily deduced from a knowledge of the type of religion preached from many rural pulpits. But we need not stop with mere deduction, for this is borne out by surveys which have been made. From a careful study of certain moral and civic characteristics and the church habits of people in eighteen counties in Ohio, Gill reached the conclusion that the church was failing in this leadership. Furthermore, he was almost inclined to believe that this was due to the fact that the church's type of religion, together with the sectarianism which exists, contributed to civic unrighteousness. The following is quoted from his conclusion.

It is evident that the failure of the churches in this area cannot be laid to the weakness or poverty of the denominations represented, for they are, for the most part, neither weak nor poor. Ohio, moreover, is a wealthy state, and its churches make large contributions for church work and church extension both in America and abroad.

In rural Ohio, the worst moral and religious conditions are found where there are the largest number of churches in proportion to the number of inhabitants. . . . In the rural sections of these eighteen counties, there are 1542 churches and 248 townships, or more than six churches to a township.

In the state as a whole, about one-third, or 34 per cent, of the rural churches have resident ministers. But in thirteen of the eighteen counties, less than one-fifth of the churches have resident ministers. Here, as in most rural sections, an absentee ministry is necessarily ineffective.

Officials of denominations to which more than two-thirds of the churches belong, encourage or permit the promotion of a religion of the excessively emotional type, which encourages rolling upon the floor by men, women, and children, and going into trances, while some things which have happened in the regular services of a church in one of the largest denominations cannot be described in print.<sup>1</sup>

Table 102 shows the correlation between moral and civic conditions and the church organization of the eighteen counties cov-

<sup>1</sup> Gill, C. O., and Pinchot, G., *Six Thousand Country Churches*, pp. 19-21, by permission of The Macmillan Company.

## 474 AN ADEQUATE RURAL RELIGIOUS PROGRAM

TABLE 102 — MORAL AND CIVIC CONDITIONS AND CHURCH ORGANIZATION<sup>a</sup>

	Average for Eighty-eight Counties of Ohio	Facts from Most Out- standing County of the Eight- een, per Item <sup>a</sup>
Average annual rate of deaths from tuberculosis of the lungs, per 100,000 persons, 1909, 1910, 1911	125	217
Average annual rate, per 100,000 population, of illegitimate births for 1909, 1910	43 9	123
Per cent of illiterate males of voting age, 1910	4 2	11 6
Number of persons to a church	279	178
Per cent of churches having resident ministers	34	14
Number of persons to each resident minister	825	1458

<sup>a</sup> While the most outstanding county per individual item is presented in this table, it is also true that any one of the eighteen counties could have been substituted and the same comparison, but with different ratios, would have held.

ered in his study. The facts in this table are almost too obvious for any discussion. Although every item listed is of civic or moral significance to a community, the number of churches, the denominational zeal, and the frequency of revival meetings have apparently not influenced the civic and moral life of these counties except, possibly, adversely. In one of these counties 1500 revival services had been held in the last thirty years, nevertheless, it was in some of these counties that vote selling became a national scandal a few years ago. One fact in the table is particularly worthy of note, *i e.*, that the number of resident ministers per church and per number of people was low. There was an overabundance of churches; but the religious teacher, community pastor and moral leader supposedly supplied by the church was absent in all but 14 per cent of the cases. But social causation is too complex to permit the assumption of the truth of the causal relationships which Gill implies, and it therefore should not be assumed that these cases, which are probably extreme, prove the complete absence of church influence, much less that there is a positive correlation between overchurching and immorality.

An individual's or a community's moral and ethical character

<sup>a</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 37.

# AN ADEQUATE RURAL RELIGIOUS PROGRAM 475

does not result from sudden conversion, except in unusual cases, it is a matter of habits and, often, of judgment. No great contribution to individual and community character building can be expected from a church leadership which is active only during a short revival meeting, only one Sunday a month or a quarter, or even only one Sunday during a year; the leadership must be continuous. Absentee ministers, short pastorates and a program restricted to preaching alone cannot suffice. It is not surprising that, at present, a rural congregation hires and fires a preacher on the basis of liking or disliking his pulpit performance, for as a rule this is practically all he has an opportunity to demonstrate under the present inefficient organization of the rural church. The church must supply a preacher who will live in the community over a period of years, who can give systematic training in moral and

TABLE 103.—NUMBER OF MINISTERS IN VIRGINIA COUNTIES WHO ARE REPORTED TO HAVE RENDERED MATERIAL ASSISTANCE TO VARIOUS RURAL LIFE AGENCIES AND MOVEMENTS<sup>a</sup>

	White		Negro	
	Number	Per Cent	Number	Per Cent
Number counties reporting	54	54 0	14	14 0
Number ministers in counties reporting	1033 <sup>a</sup>	50 0	276	25 3
Number ministers active in one or more movements	203	19 6	72	26 0
Number ministers active in				
School improvement	143	13 8	49	17 7
Health and sanitation work	107	10 4	50	18 1
Community organization	93	9 0	44	15 9
Law enforcement	79	7 6	5	1 8
School or public library	58	5 6	8	2 9
Road improvement	42	4 1	1	4
Recreational work	42	4 1	8	2 9
Community beautification	42	4 1	12	4 3
Farm agent work	40	3 9	38	13 8
4-H Club work	30	2 9	37	13 4
Good race relations	28	2 7	38	13 8
Marketing organizations	21	2 0	1	4
Home agent work	14	1 3	19	6 9

<sup>a</sup> 1033 is used as the basis for calculating percentages for white ministers, and 276 for Negro ministers.

<sup>b</sup> Hamilton, C. H., and Garnett, W. E., *op cit.*, p. 123.



## 476 AN ADEQUATE RURAL RELIGIOUS PROGRAM

ethical judgments and ideals, and who can and will participate in guiding every human adjustment

In their recent rather comprehensive analysis, "The Rôle of the Church in Rural Community Life in Virginia," Hamilton and Garnett attempted to determine whether the rural church was capable of leadership in civic ethics and programs. Table 103 gives information on the number of ministers who reported giving material assistance to rural life, and the type of work they did. The following quotation presents some of the findings from this study: "Only 22 per cent of the 200 ministers subscribe to a farm paper. Ninety-four per cent subscribe to a church paper, 66 per cent to a daily newspaper, 60 per cent to current events periodicals and 57 per cent to home magazines. Only 3 per cent receive farm bulletins regularly."<sup>4</sup> However, the authors do not stop with the inferences which could logically be drawn from these facts, but state the results in terms of actual behavior.

This study also attempted to learn the opinion of rural ministers, and the church's position and concern, on twenty-five social issues. A questionnaire was accordingly submitted to rural ministers and, for purposes of comparison, it was submitted also to

	Types of Situations							
	Religious and Moral	Health	Dancing, Cards and Movies	Education	Civic Matters	Negro Education	Economic	All Situations
Rural sociologists	74	61	22	44	53	50	44	52
Survey Committee	80	45	37	41	41	48	35	49
Sunday school teachers	85	40	65	41	38	29	20	47
Rural ministers	85	48	52	42	29	23	19	45
Church leaders	88	42	47	31	24	22	18	39
Negro college students	75	25	18	15	24	47	- 8	23
White college students	70	21	4	1	21	1	-16	15
All groups	80	43	38	35	35	33	21	42

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 118

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 140

several other groups Table 104 indicates the relative importance given to the issues, classified under eight headings, by each group; a rank of 100 for any item in any column would indicate that everyone answering the questionnaire believed that all the situations in that class should be a "concern of the church"

**The Rural Church Must Be a Real Social Institution.**—The work of a social institution is always twofold—performing well its own share of society's work, and working in cooperation with other institutions and agencies The church's share of work and the specific tasks of the rural church were outlined in the preceding chapter; here we shall discuss its cooperation with other agencies and institutions, which is of equal importance

The church often finds that the community in which it is located is deprived of many benefits which other communities enjoy Community life may be abnormal for several reasons. the young people may have no adequate leisure-time program; there may be no social and improvement clubs for adults, library facilities may be lacking, the farmers may not be cooperating with one another, transportation and communication facilities may be poor, there may be unhealthful and unsanitary places and practices, or the people may lack educational vision and ideals. All these are of the deepest concern to the life of the members of the community, and if no other agency has a definite program and the organization for handling them satisfactorily, the church is undoubtedly justified in including them in its work If, however, they are being taken care of by other agencies in the community, the church should work in active cooperation with them—for example, it can often furnish the place and facilities for presenting programs, and promote their success by announcement and advertisement

In considering its own institutional significance, the church needs to realize primarily that no social institution is an end in itself, consequently, every item in its program and every purpose which it strives to achieve should be not for itself alone, but for the community The chief fault of the rural church of the past—and of the sectarian church of the present—has been that it regards the community as a territory to be worked in order that the church may be built up, rather than regarding itself as a powerful working agency in the life of the community Every institution—government, industry, school, church, and home—is too likely to think of itself as having vested rights because it is an institution,

## 478 AN ADEQUATE RURAL RELIGIOUS PROGRAM

and the church is particularly addicted to this because of its other-worldly teachings. Only by adequately fulfilling the functions which justified its origin can the church—or any other social institution—continue to make good its claim to existence.

### THE EFFICIENT ORGANIZATION OF THE RURAL CHURCH

**The Par-Standard for Country Churches.**—One of the developments arising from the Interchurch World Movement was the creation of the "Par-Standard for Country Churches." This standard was worked out and approved by the Town and Country Committee of the Home Mission Council, and submitted to a large group of survey workers representing every state in the Union. All these men had done field survey work and were familiar with the different conditions existing in this country, in addition, they had been country ministers and consequently knew at first hand the problems of the rural church. There was unanimous agreement that this Par-Standard should be put before the country churches of America, not as an impossible ideal, but as a goal which they might reasonably expect to attain.

Morse and Brunner make the following comment on the original Par-Standard, and describe the creation of a new Par-Standard:

It had been hoped that the study of these twenty-six counties would reveal a sufficient number of conspicuously successful churches to warrant their plans and methods being described. Unfortunately this was not the case. The facts then have been reported as they are. In a separate study the Committee on Social and Religious Surveys investigated the most successful town and country churches which it could find anywhere in America.

These standards, graded by the above standard, more than doubled the average rating with a record of 85.5 per cent. On the basis of the actual working experience of these successful churches a new par-standard of fifty points was worked out. This new standard summarizes the average working program of the successful rural church.<sup>6</sup>

No attempt was made to indicate any comparative valuation of the various items in this standard; thus the score makes no distinction between a resident full-time pastor and horse sheds or parking space. This is obviously a weakness, but the purpose in drawing up the standard was not to make a comparative valua-

<sup>6</sup> Morse, H. N., and Brunner, E. deS., *op cit.*, p. 169.

tion, but to suggest minimum achievements for an average country congregation. A rural church with fifty points, the highest score, would not necessarily be an ideal church, but it would be far better equipped for its work than is the average rural church at present. The standard has been adopted by one denomination and by the home mission departments of two others, with slight modifications to meet their own needs.

This new Par-Standard<sup>7</sup> covers the following points.

#### NEW PAR-STANDARD

##### Physical Equipment

- 1 A comfortable, attractive parsonage with modern improvements, furnished rent free
- 2 Auditorium with seating capacity adequate to maximum attendance at regular services
- 3 Pipe organ or piano.
- 4 Space for social and recreational purposes, fitted with movable chairs and a platform, and large enough for the largest crowds in the habit of assembling there
- 5 Separate rooms or curtained spaces for Sunday school classes or departments
- 6 Moving-picture machine or stereopticon facilities
- 7 A well-planned, well-equipped kitchen.
- 8 Sanitary lavatories
- 9 Parking space for automobiles, or horse sheds
- 10 All property kept in good repair and slightly condition
- 11 Bulletin boards for display of church announcements
- 12 Playground
- 13 Recreational equipment—games, volley ball, croquet, quoits (indoor and outdoor), and the like

##### Religious and Missionary Education

- 14 Sunday school maintained throughout the year
- 15 Sunday school enrollment at least equal to church membership, with an average attendance of at least two-thirds its membership.
- 16 Definite and regular attempt to bring pupils into church membership, and specific instruction in preparation therefor

<sup>7</sup> "A Proposed Goal for the Rural Church," prepared for experimental use by the Department of Country Life and Leadership Training of the Reformed Church in the United States, presents a score card very similar to the Par-Standard. See *The Country Life Bulletin*, Town and Country Department of the Congregational Church Extension Board, 287 Fourth Avenue, New York, vol. III, August-November, 1929, nos. 2 and 3.

## 480 AN ADEQUATE RURAL RELIGIOUS PROGRAM

- 17 Teacher-training or normal class regularly provided
18. Definite provision for enlistment and training of leaders for church and community work other than in Sunday school.
- 19 Communicant classes regularly held in preparation for church membership.
- 20 Week-day religious instruction provided
- 21 Daily Vacation Bible School held
- 22 School of Missions, or systematic Mission Study class regularly held
23. The missionary work of the church regularly presented from the pulpit and in the Sunday school
- 24 At least one representative in professional Christian service.

### Finance

25. The church budget, including both local expenses and benevolences, adopted annually by the congregation.
26. Every-member canvass for weekly offerings made annually on the basis of the local and benevolent budget adopted, all church members and adherents canvassed, envelope system used
27. The budget of benevolence either meeting the denominational apportionment in full or equal to one-third of the current expense budget (Interchurch standard 25 per cent).
- 28 All current bills paid monthly
29. A systematic plan of payments on principal and interest of debt on the church property, if any
- 30 Property insured

### Pastor

- 31 A pastor resident within the bounds of the community
- 32 A pastor giving full time to the work of his church
33. The pastor receiving a total salary of at least \$1500 a year and free use of house (Interchurch figures, \$1200).

### Program

34. At least one service of worship every Sunday.
35. Regular mid-week services
- 36 Church works systematically to extend its parish to the limits of the community
37. Church works systematically to serve all occupational classes in the community and all racial elements which do not have their own Protestant churches
38. A definite program setting goals for the year's work adopted annually by the officers and congregation and held steadily before the attention of the church.

39. A definite assumption of responsibility with respect to some part of this program (as in 38) by at least 25 per cent of the active members
40. Systematic evangelism aimed to reach the entire community and every class in the community.
41. A minimum net membership increase of 10 per cent each year
42. Community service a definite part of the church's work, including a definite program of community cooperation led by or participated in by the church
43. Definite organized activities for all the various age-and-sex groups in the congregation and community (as in Young People's Society, Men's Brotherhood, Boy Scouts, or similar efforts)
44. A systematic and cumulative survey of the parish with a view to determining the church relationships and religious needs of every family, and such a mapping of the parish as will show the relationships of each family to local religious institutions, together with a continuous and cumulative study of the social, moral and economic forces of the community, with a view to constant adaptation of program to need

#### Cooperation

45. Cooperation with other churches of the community in a definite program for community betterment.
46. Cooperation with state and county interdenominational religious agencies
47. Cooperation with local community organizations
48. Cooperation with county, state, or national welfare agencies
49. Cooperation with local and county agricultural agencies
50. Cooperation with denominational boards<sup>8</sup>

The fifty points in this standard may be summarized as follows

1. The rural church must have adequate buildings, space, and working equipment if it is to do its work satisfactorily
2. It must have a leader, in the person of the pastor, who gives his entire time to the work and whose salary is high enough to guarantee securing an adequately trained man
3. It must have an efficiently organized business policy which provides support for all its programs
4. Its meetings must be so organized and conducted as to furnish definite and consistent religious direction to the lives of the members of the community.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid*, pp 169-171

## 482 AN ADEQUATE RURAL RELIGIOUS PROGRAM

TABLE 105.—A STUDY OF ACTUAL CHURCHES, EACH DESIGNATED BY A NUMBER<sup>a</sup>  
Key V—Yes, X—No, No information

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
Endeavoring to reach entire community	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	V-0 X-10
Program adopted annually, 25 per cent of membership participating	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	V-0 X-10
Cooperation with other boards and denominational agencies	V	V	V	V	X	V	V	X	V	V	V-8 X-2
Organized activities for age and sex groups	X	X	V	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	V-1 X-9
Provision for leadership training	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	V-0 X-10
Teacher training or normal class	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	V	X	V-1 X-9
Special instruction for church membership	V	X	X	X	X	X	X	V	X	V	V-3 X-7
Systematic attempt to bring Sunday school pupils into church	X	X	X	V	X	X	X	X	X	X	V-1 X-9
Sunday school enrollment is equal to church membership	X	X	V	V	X	X	X	X	V	V	V-4 X-6
Sunday school held twelve months of year	V	V	V	V	X	V	V	V	X	V	V-8 X-2
Church serves all racial and occupational groups	X	V	V	V	X	V	X	V	V	X	V-6 X-4
There is systematic evangelism	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	V-0 X-10
Cooperation with other churches in community	V	V	V	V	X	V	V	V	V	V	V-9 X-1
Benevolences are equal to 25 per cent current expenses	V	V	V	V	X	X	V	X	X	V	V-6 X-4
Every-member canvass conducted yearly.	X	X	V	V	X	V	V	X	X	V	V-5 X-6

<sup>a</sup> Home Lands, October, 1920, p. 5

# AN ADEQUATE RURAL RELIGIOUS PROGRAM 483

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
Annual church budget adopted yearly	X	V	V	V	X	X	V	X	X	V	V-5 X-5
Salary at least \$1200 per year	V		V	V	X	X	V	X	X	V	V-5 X-4
Services in church every Sunday	V	X	V	V	V	V	V	V	X	X	V-7 X-3
Full time given by pastor to his church	X	X	V	V	V	V	V	V	X	X	V-6 X-4
Pastor resides in the community	V	X	V	V	V	V	V	V	X	X	V-7 X-3
Property in good repair, in good condition	V		V	V	V	X	V	V	V	V	V-6 X-1
Horse sheds or parking space on property	X	V	V	X		V	X	V	V	V	V-6 X-3
Sanitary toilets provided	X	X	X	V	X	X	V	X	X	X	V-2 X-8
Stereopticon or movies	V	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	V	V-2 X-8
Separate Sunday school rooms	V	V	V	V	X	X	V	X	X	X	V-5 X-5
Well equipped kitchen	X	V	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	V-1 X-9
Other social and recreational equipment	X	X	X	X	X	X	V	X	X	X	V-1 X-9
Adequate church auditorium space	X	X	X	X	V	X	X	V	V	V	V-4 X-6
Up-to-date parsonage	V	V	X	V	V	V	V	V	X	X	V-7 X-3
Total points reached	12	10	16	17	6	10	15	11	8	13	Average 11.8



## 484 AN ADEQUATE RURAL RELIGIOUS PROGRAM

5. It must conceive of its parish as encompassing all types and classes of people it can bring within its influence

6. It must provide religious education to train people both to carry on its program and to live efficiently in the community

7. Its program must challenge the interest and gain the support of everyone, regardless of age, sex, or economic and social status.

Table 105 illustrates the application of the new Par-Standard, slightly modified and covering only twenty-nine points, to ten rural churches, whose average score is 117. A study of this table reveals the salient weaknesses in these ten churches. For example, not one attempts to reach the entire community, not one adopts an annual program of work, not one provides for leadership training, and not one practices systematic evangelism. These four weaknesses strike at the very fundamentals of the work of the rural church, for a church is indeed weak which overlooks the possibilities of activity in these directions. Moreover, the influence of sectarianism is again manifest in the failure of every one of these churches even to attempt to reach the entire community.

**One Church in the Community, with an Adequate Building and Equipment.**—To divide religion's institutional program for a community among several churches, each with the same purpose and function, is just as foolish as to divide the community's educational program among several schools, each covering the same ground. But the author is thoroughly aware of the difficulty in attempting to organize church efforts on the purely mechanical basis of one church to each community, for sectarian loyalty runs too deep at present to permit a rapid reorganization along this line. However, there can be little doubt that it will eventually be fairly universal. In some places it will be the result of conscious rational effort, in others it may have to rely on "the survival of the fittest" of the several churches in the community. The tragedy of permitting it to result from "survival" lies in the fact that religion will be weak in the community for many years to come and that, in many cases, every church will fail, leaving the community without any church, as has already happened in several rural districts.

In discussing in the preceding chapter the weaknesses of the rural church in Ohio, it was suggested that one-fifth of the present number of churches could adequately supply the rural people's church needs, and that each church would therefore be five times

as efficient and well equipped as it is at present. Let us put this into actual figures. The average church membership in Ohio is 280, the new membership would be 1400. Each church averages about 13 rooms; the new church would average 65 rooms. The value of the church building would be increased from \$3000, its present average value, to \$15,000, the ground around it would be five acres instead of one, the present average. The average annual budget is \$1618, five times this is \$8090. If the disbursements were allocated as they are in Green and Claremont Counties, there would be \$2115 for the pastor's salary, \$240 for the Sunday school, \$440 for supervision, \$2010 for repairs, \$495 for home missions, \$595 for foreign missions, \$770 for other benevolences, and the remainder for fuel, light, janitor service, and other current expenses. If these figures are tabulated, as in Table 106, they give a better idea of the advantages of consolidation. This tabulation is given merely to show what might be expected

TABLE 106 —A NORMAL, CONSOLIDATED RURAL CHURCH

Grounds	five acres
Rooms	six or seven
Membership	1400
Parsonage	\$9910
Annual budget	8090
Pastor's salary	2115
Sunday school expense	240
Home missions	495
Foreign missions	595
Other benevolences	770
Supervision	440
Repairs	2010
Current expense	1425

if duplication and waste in expenditure, equipment and effort were eliminated, there are some rural churches which provide outstanding examples of what has already been done toward this end.<sup>10</sup>

There are other advantages in consolidation, in addition to these items of physical equipment and financial outlay, for it leads to the better organization of church effort along every line—for example, it makes possible better and more capable Sunday school teachers, and better talent for musical programs. A church which the community recognizes as its only adequate religious institu-

<sup>10</sup> See Brunner, E. deS., *Churches of Distinction in Town and Country*, Doubleday, Doran & Company, Inc., New York, 1923.

tion will rally non-members to its support, as well as members, it will attract all members of the community to its services, it will enroll in its Sunday school practically every child of suitable age, and it will become the community's natural social center in the promotion of every program not adequately taken care of by another agency. The author could not make this statement so confidently had he not known personally some half-dozen such churches, and heard, on good authority, of several others.

In the attempt to eliminate the duplication and waste of effort and the conflict of purpose, several practical plans for community churches have been evolved, among which are the federation of churches, denominational trade or exchange, church union, and monopoly by one denomination.

In a federation of churches, each congregation preserves its own denominational identity, and each denomination meets its own obligations; but the combined congregations meet in one place, support one pastor, and consolidate all local church efforts. The pastorate sometimes rotates among the various denominations; sometimes one pastor satisfies all of them so well that he is retained for several years, and sometimes one is secured from a denomination other than is represented in the federation. The last plan is probably best because it eliminates all interdenominational suspicion and really creates one church, except as each congregation is obligated to the directing organization of its own denomination.

Denominational trade, or exchange, approaches complete unity even more closely than federation, and demonstrates a worthy attitude on the part of both the higher church officials and the local congregations. This plan is found where each of two denominations has a church in two different communities, the church of one being stronger in one community and weaker in the other, and *vice versa*. Under this plan, each denomination agrees to withdraw its own church from the community in which it is the weaker, thus merging with the stronger one. However, such churches do not lose their denominational identity in the community, and this is likely to handicap them in their efforts to enlist adherents of other denominations.

Two or more local churches of different denominations may agree to cancel their sectarian loyalty completely and form a strictly union church; a union church may also be organized in

a community in which no denomination has built a church. These union churches have met with difficulties in the past, for it is not easy to find a thoroughly non-denominational minister, or a directing organization through which they can participate in the larger religious programs of the world—in missionary work, for example, for all missionary boards are organized on a denominational basis.

There are numerous instances in which, even in the face of rampant sectarian zeal, one denomination develops so strong a church in a community as to preclude any other denominational attempt at building a church. In other communities, only one of several churches survives and consequently has a monopoly in the locality. This type of church is weak in that members of other sects do not ally themselves with it and, in particular, feel no obligation to support it. But such churches have little impulse for propagating sectarian doctrines, and consequently they probably do fairly adequate community work.

Almost every strong rural church in this country today is one of these types, for few rural communities can, or will, support two strong churches. But regardless of which scheme of church organization is chosen by the community or develops in it—and there are numerous examples of each one—a step toward the practical solution of the problem of the rural church has been taken by that community.

**Adequate Church Leadership.**—Churches need various types of leadership—pastors, church directors or official boards, Sunday school leaders, music leaders, and sometimes leaders in recreation and club work. Nothing strikes the observer of the rural church more forcibly than its failure to conduct even its Sunday school and church service expeditiously and efficiently. The members of its board do not show the same vision, concern, and hard-headed business judgment in church affairs that they do in their own business, Sunday school teachers are extremely weak in both knowledge and teaching technique, there are few music leaders, and even the pastor is seldom equipped for rural leadership. An adequate church must be large enough to challenge the best judgment and deepest concern of its official board; its membership must be large enough to provide a field from which its musical and Sunday school talent can be drawn, and it must conduct classes and institutes to provide this training; finally, it must have

sufficient financial support to enable it to secure a well-trained minister

Whether, in addition to being a trained church leader, the pastor should also be a skilled agriculturalist is a moot question, but the author is convinced that he should not only be thoroughly rural minded but also have a good knowledge of agriculture. Although he can hardly be expected to be a graduate of an agricultural college, besides being specially trained for the ministry, he should without doubt have some training in rural sociology and agricultural economics, and his need for this training should be made clear to him while he is still in college. If his training in science, history, and economics has been adequate, and if he is a consistent reader of agricultural journals and is actively interested in farming problems, he will find himself well versed in farming, and that his judgment is good. Unless he has a deep appreciation and understanding of the interests and problems of agriculture, he cannot expect to exert any great influence on men whose thought is on these questions the greater part of their waking hours. He cannot feign an interest in farm problems, nor can he attain it in any sleight-of-hand way. He must *know* farming; he must be a student of farm economics and social conditions, and his interest in such technical phases as soils, crops and animals must be real. If a partial education in agriculture is necessary to develop this interest, appreciation, and knowledge, then it must be provided for him, for it is upon him that rural life depends for a great part of its leadership.

There is no group of men in rural life work in this country who have such great opportunities as are offered to the something like 100,000 ministers who preach in our rural churches. The very heart of their work is to promote the things that build and foster a richer rural life; they reach every rural person regardless of age, sex, or economic and social status, and practically everyone who comes to hear them preach is in a receptive frame of mind. They are supposed to have had an opportunity of knowing the world of literature, science, history, politics and business, and they should be able to bring a message and a vision to rural communities that are possible from no other source. If these rural preachers had any realization of the potential scope of their work and their opportunities, they could remake rural civilization in one generation.

**An Adequate Rural Church Program.**—The rural church should formulate its program on the following principles.

1 To reach every member of the community, old and young, rich and poor, good and bad, church members and non-members alike.

2. To meet each group on the plane of its natural and major interests, and to offer something that everyone, regardless of his moral code, will see fit to use. In other words, it must include in its scope of work farming, marketing, home affairs, community social life, recreation, education, and music.

3 To do whatever is necessary to better the community, but to attempt nothing that is already being done satisfactorily.

4 To compensate the community consistently and in known values for all its contributions to the church—in short, to offer something more than "other-worldly" religion.

5 To work consistently to enlist and prepare every member of the community for Christian activity.

6 To project so valuable and rich a program that the community, if deprived of it, would feel its loss vitally.

Many people deny that the church ought to attempt all these things, and many others feel that it is impossible—as indeed it is under the present organization—for the church to follow so inclusive a program. But two simple truths which are universally recognized justify every part of the program as outlined. The church cannot fulfill its function for all if it fails to reach some, and it can reach no one except on the plane of his own interest. It is as futile for any institution to attempt to lead people by merely inviting them to join it, as it is to try to lead a horse without going where the horse is. The rural community cannot be Christianized by deriding those who pay no attention to the minister's invitation to come to church, the church must be taken to the people by means of a program that reaches every fiber of the community's body and courses through its very life blood. There is hardly any program that can be devised for this purpose that is not of distinct benefit for the community. For example, if a recreational program is shown to be the most effective means, there are three great values inherent in it. (1) Wholesome and constructive recreation is of itself good. (2) Such a program attracts young people to the church and shows them that religion deepens and enriches life, rather than restricting it. (3) It trains

church leaders to recognize the values and potentialities present in the young people of the community. It is possible, of course, that some churches and ministers neglect the main purpose of religion because they become too actively interested in a program of social work and entertainment, but the writer maintains that such cases are the exception, and that these programs offer too great advantages to permit barring them on such grounds.

If systematic and practical evangelism means something more than merely getting new church members, if it means developing purposes in the lives of people and Christianizing the community as a whole, then the church must cooperate with every agency which is promoting community welfare and efficiency, and, in the absence of such agencies, it is justified in assuming this work itself.

#### OTHER RELIGIOUS AGENCIES IN RURAL LIFE

The Young Men's Christian Association and the Young Women's Christian Association are active in religious work in rural communities to a greater extent than any other similar organizations.

**The Y.M.C.A.**—This organization makes country work a definite part of the program of the national Association, and it is active in many sections of the country. It supplements the work of rural and village churches, and in addition does many worthwhile things which the church could do only with difficulty. It works in small towns and the open country, confining its program to activities which do not require Association buildings or elaborate equipment. It combines volunteer effort and expert leadership. The county secretary is a college graduate who as a rule has been a leader in religious, social and athletic activities in college. Behind him is a county committee of fifteen or twenty business men and farmers; these men are also assigned to sub-committees and local committees to help formulate the policies and promote the activities of the Association. Above the county units are district organizations and secretaries, above these, the state organizations and, finally, the national organization. The great summer conferences at Hollister, Missouri, Estes Park, Colorado, Lake Geneva, Wisconsin, and Blue Ridge, North Carolina, devote as much time and effort to country work as to any other phase.

The Association work is carried out on the basis of commu-

nity units. A local community leader is appointed for each unit; he works with the boys in all their activities and conducts Bible classes. The members of these local units attend the county meetings, they meet in athletic contests, at banquets, and often in summer camps. Financial support for the work is obtained by voluntary subscription, and the annual budget runs from \$2000 to \$6000 for each county.

The Association never competes with church programs; on the contrary, the secretary works closely with the Sunday school and church, and encourages all his boys to participate in their activities. He is often able to eliminate religious strife in the community. In addition to its religious program—or as part of it—the country Y M C A promotes athletic and recreational programs; many a country boy who would otherwise be deprived of such activities thus has the chance to participate in field meets, basket ball, baseball, and volley ball. Some of the larger and better-supported branches employ a special man to direct athletics. The Association promotes health practices and teaches health habits. In short, it does anything and everything that encourages self-improvement and physical, mental, moral and spiritual well-being among the boys and young men in small towns and rural districts.

**The Y.W.C.A.**—The general purposes and principles of the Y W C A are the same as those of the Y M.C.A., its slogan is "Members, not equipment." Its work is not as widespread in rural communities as is that of the Y M.C.A., but like the latter it has county secretaries and committees, and undertakes no program calling for an Association building or elaborate equipment. It carries on recreational, health, and religious programs on a community, county, state and national basis, and for the past few years it has held a national town and country conference at Lake Geneva, Wisconsin. In addition to its regular country work, the Y W.C.A. cooperates with student committees from colleges in the training given in its Eight Week Club. Summer camps, reading clubs, Bible classes, pageants, health exercises and recreation programs constitute this branch of the work.

#### MEASURES AND AGENCIES FOR IMPROVING THE RURAL RELIGIOUS SITUATION

**Evidences of Change in the Rural Church.**—The church is the most unyielding of all institutions from the point of view of rapid change. Not only is it incrustated with the custom and



## 492 AN ADEQUATE RURAL RELIGIOUS PROGRAM

tradition which are inherent in any institution, but in addition it is burdened with religious sanctity and overhead denominational machinery. Nevertheless, a large group of people—ministers, for the most part—and some whole denominations are giving more than a promise that sweeping changes in the rural church are in the making. Foremost among the tendencies in this direction is the vast amount of elaborate research which has been carried on in this field during the last fifteen years. The Institute of Social and Religious Research has made a more critical analysis and offered more constructive suggestions than has any other agency; and other valuable contributions in this field have also been made by certain denominational bodies, some agricultural college experiment stations, and other research bodies.

A number of denominational boards have employed men who are specialists in the field of rural life, and various theological seminaries and denominational colleges have added courses—sometimes departments—specializing in rural sociology. Practically every preacher-training institution now emphasizes philosophy, history, economics, sociology and psychology, instead of systematic theology and its allied subjects. The Inter-seminary Commission for the Training of the Rural Ministry, assisted by many rural experts, has worked systematically on a new preacher-training curriculum.<sup>11</sup>

This movement, begun in 1929 by the Hartford Seminary Foundation, is largely responsible for a new step in theological education and is the most outstanding project in this country for the training of rural ministers. It amounts to a seminary "co-operative," a movement which is in complete harmony with an age characterized more and more by cooperation in social, economic and religious activities. The Hartford Theological Seminary was the first to establish, in 1926, a "Country Life Department," directed by Professors C. M. Geer and W. D. Barnes. The scene chosen for experimental work was a district in New London County, the center of which was Montville, the pastorate was held by Professor Barnes, assisted by a group of students. In 1927 arrangements were made with the Congregational Church Extension Boards to supplement the Seminary courses with the services of the Reverend Malcolm Dana, the director of their

<sup>11</sup> "Activity Notes," by Dr. Malcolm Dana of Hartford Theological Seminary and Yale Divinity School, and supplied to the writer by him.

Town and Country Department; and Dr Dana was accordingly in residence at the Seminary for two months, and gave a three-hour course in rural sociological backgrounds and country church methods. The Seminary continued this plan the following year, with the cooperation of the Yale Divinity School, and in January, 1928, representatives of these two institutions entered into an agreement to cooperate still further in a more comprehensive effort to train men for the rural ministry. The practical results of this cooperative agreement were brought to the attention of John D Rockefeller, Jr, and he has given funds for three years' experimental work to be undertaken by an Inter-seminary Commission for the Training of the Rural Ministry. By offering seminary courses on rural sociology, rural church work, and related subjects, as well as by providing supervision and counsel for students who are serving rural parishes, the Commission is seeking to create a leadership capable of eliminating the waste and ineffectiveness so characteristic of rural parishes.

Five theological seminaries in New England—the Bangor Theological Seminary, the Boston University School of Theology, the Newton Theological Institution, the Yale Divinity School, and the Hartford Seminary Foundation—are cooperating in this work, and the members of the Commission are drawn from these five seminaries. At the end of the three years' work now provided for, the Commission plans to add men to the staff until, in the sixth year, each of the constituent institutions will have one man giving full time to this work, and a sixth man serving as Director of Research and Service.<sup>12</sup>

The churches themselves are realizing the need for change, and two great denominations—the Congregational and the Northern Presbyterian—have agreed not to duplicate efforts in church extension work in given localities, many similar agreements are being made locally between other denominations. The following quotations are excerpts from "Ideals for the Town and Country Church," gotten out by the Congregational Church Extension Boards:

There should be only so many churches as can be successfully cared for. . . .

<sup>12</sup> *Bulletin of the Hartford Seminary Foundation*, Hartford Seminary Press, Hartford, vol. xvi, October-November, 1929, no. 1

## 494 AN ADEQUATE RURAL RELIGIOUS PROGRAM

There should be a minister over areas which shall include rural centers and the adjacent countryside, with the use of the Larger Parish Program . . .

The inefficiency of churches due to the short pastorate should be remedied by giving missionary aid only to those churches which are willing to do their full share in paying an adequate salary in carrying on a genuine community program . . .

Superintendents and others in charge of rural work should give themselves special and continual training for the town and country portion of their task and should place upon their staffs trained country-life specialists. . . .

A given community should not be entitled to more than one church unless it can support its churches without missionary aid. . .

Denominational leaders should divorce themselves entirely from any spirit or practice of denominational competition, and should discourage overchurching by withholding missionary aid from competing churches . . .

Leaders of rural work should be close students of rural sociology, rural psychology, and rural economics, endeavoring to put the results of such studies of rural life and institutions at the disposal of all those who are trying to deal with them . . .

Country-life departments should be established in seminaries and colleges to provide both ministerial and lay leadership for the town and country . . .

Special courses should be provided by theological seminaries for the adequate training of town and country ministers, and a supervised clinical experience should be provided, which will give practical knowledge of rural problems and fitness to grapple with them . . .

Relationships should be established with agricultural colleges which will furnish contacts with forward-looking men, and study courses designated to develop an enthusiasm for town and country work

Recognizing the practical difficulty of maintaining or developing zeal for the rural church in seminaries located in urban centers, and the advantage of training the rural ministry in educational institutions in the immediate vicinity of the countryside, some seminaries or theological institutions should be established in close affiliation with colleges of agriculture, where students may have immediate contact with rurally minded instructors, country-life movements, and rural environment <sup>18</sup>

Not least among the measures and agencies for the improvement of rural church conditions is the growth of community,

<sup>18</sup> "Activity Notes," circulated by the Town and Country Department of the Congregational Church Extension Boards, 287 Fourth Avenue, New York.

federated, and united churches In 1925, the Institute of Social and Religious Research made a survey of these churches in this country, with the exception of the south, and it found that there were 977 such churches, practically all of which (96 per cent) were in small villages or the open country The survey also showed that the ministers are better trained and better paid, and that there are more resident ministers, than is the case in the average rural church.<sup>14</sup> Since this survey is over five years old, and did not include the south, it is probably safe to say that the people of more than 1000 rural communities in this country have decided that the duplication and denominational competition which are the causes of the inefficiency of the rural church must be abolished

### QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

- 1 Do you think that rural people are more or less religious than city people?
- 2 How can the rural church exercise moral and ethical leadership?
- 3 What subjects, now omitted from the curricula of theological seminaries, do you think should be added in order to train country ministers adequately for their work?
- 4 Describe both the best and the worst country church you know of
- 5 What would be the gain if there were only one church for each rural community?
- 6 What agency, other than the church, wields the greatest religious influence in your community?
- 7 What is your plan for the solution of the problem of the rural church?

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<sup>14</sup> Hoover, E R, *United Churches*, Doubleday, Doran & Company, Inc, New York, 1926 See also McCulloch, Robert W, "The New Church of the Rural Community," *Survey*, vol cu, no 6, December, 1926, pp 369-371

## 496 AN ADEQUATE RURAL RELIGIOUS PROGRAM

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## CHAPTER XXI

### THE PROBLEM OF RURAL RECREATION

#### THE RÔLE OF RECREATION IN LIFE

**The Distinction between Amusement, Play and Recreation.**—The value and importance of play in life is one of the major discoveries of this generation. We have found that the desire to play is not confined to children, that its value is not limited to childhood, and that natural and constructive play must be provided for any individual or community in order to insure a rich or even normal life. Because of our greater understanding of individual emotions and social structures, play is no longer thought of merely as amusement, nor is recreation thought to consist only of either play or amusement.

Amusement is the state of being pleasantly entertained. It is always an element in play, but it may be present in other forms such as ludicrousness or dissipation. For example, a person who slips on a banana peel is ludicrous and therefore amusing, but the incident itself affords neither play nor recreation for either actor or observer. One might go through life highly amused, and yet never experience actual play beyond the emotional exhilaration coming from a stage continually turned upside down. Play is fun, but not necessarily funny—it may be very serious.

Play is amusement, plus an end or goal to be attained. If it is a game, the goal is consciously set, if not, the goal is still present in the form of the tonic to life, the joy of experience, and the development of personality. Play is a part of life, and as universal as life itself; it is so characteristic of children and young animals that many regard it as instinctive. Action that is restrained or disciplined by ends other than the development of the personality of the one who acts must be described as work. That which is sufficiently dynamic to constitute freedom of action and development is play, and such freedom is an absolute essential to the development of personality. As Joseph Lee, president of the Na-

tional Recreation Association, says, "It [play] is nature's course of study" In discussing the possible detriment in forcing certain activities upon children before they are sufficiently developed to handle them, Herbert S. Jennings, Professor of Biology at Johns Hopkins University, says "There is one method of the exercise of the powers that is almost free from these dangers, and that is what we call play"

Recreation includes the joy of amusement and the constructive development of play, but it goes farther in that it consciously re-creates what has been torn down or creates or builds something new in life Its first essential is relaxation, or freedom from that which tears down—work, worry, or monotony, its second is that it actually be carried forward by some activity, the momentum of which is supplied by the zest that accompanies amusement and play. Its third essential is that it construct or reconstruct, or create or re-create

Rural people's need for recreation is readily seen when we ask whether they need release from monotony and the zest which comes with play, and whether the creative process, which is a product of freedom and zest, should be woven into their lives If these factors are worth while in life generally, they are unquestionably the birthright of every boy and girl, and of every man and woman, in the open country.

**The Value of Play.**—Play is not only nature's preventive medicine, but also a part of her method of developing a normal adult If given an adequate play environment and opportunity, a child will develop its muscles and neuro-muscular coordinations as rapidly as their growth makes possible. The idea that daily chores offer these opportunities to rural children is a sad misconception, for no work task on earth can furnish them. The purpose of work is not the development of the worker, but rather ends outside the worker's immediate life. Nor do open air and freedom of exercise afford to rural children the full benefits of play, for normal growth and development demand balanced activities just as much as balanced diets. These statements are equally true in the case of the daily routine of the adult man and woman on the farm for, varied as farm work is, it cannot furnish a sufficient diversification of activities to insure a balanced and healthful functioning of the muscles, nerves, and vital organs of the body

The *physical value* of play is now quite well established, al-

though there is still considerable research to be done in this field. We know that (1) play is a tonic in that it arouses the emotions and thus reacts on the nerves, muscles and vital organs. (2) It develops the body symmetrically, because all parts of the body are being exercised in balance, whereas work generally exercises only certain groups of muscles. (3) It quickens sense reactions—seeing, hearing, etc.—and this gradually becomes a part of one's habits. (4) It develops coordination, rhythm and grace, in contrast to the awkwardness and clumsiness often characteristic of rural people.

The *mental value* of play is probably more pronounced—and probably more needed by rural people—than the physical value. Country people are not mentally less capable, their work is no less stimulating than that of manual workers in the city, nor are they called upon less frequently for so-called mental activity. However, stimuli outside the work routine afford additional opportunities to a far greater extent in the city, and for this reason country people—and especially growing children—should be given an opportunity to form the habits which are induced and established by means of play. Play is of definite mental value in that it develops: (1) alertness, initiative, and the ability to make quick decisions; (2) enthusiasm, joy, and optimism; and (3) precision, courage, and skill, which lead to self-confidence. These mental attitudes, if instilled in the child, will help him to make successful adjustments in his life, and many of them are furnished by no other childhood activity but play.

The *social values* of play are even more important than the physical and mental, and rural people need these above all others because it is in social experience that they are lacking. Group action among rural people is today more possible and more necessary than ever before, and anything that develops cooperative, community, or group action will of necessity have great value in rural life. Play is almost always a social project and, as such, is of social value in that it develops (1) community interest; (2) cooperative technique through team play and through organizing and promoting play activities; (3) leadership; (4) community loyalty to community teams, and (5) greater capacity of association, since play brings people into enlivened contact with each other and in groups.

The *moral values* of play are sufficiently recognized today to



make it a part of the regular program of activities of churches and other religious agencies. Their purpose in this is not merely to attract and attach people to their particular creed, as was once the case, they now recognize that ethics and morality can best be taught by inculcating them in people's habits and attitudes. This cannot be done by directing people's work, for this is beyond their control, nor can it be done by precept and preaching. Consequently they attempt it by directing their play activities. The moral values of play are the development of (1) self-control, self-confidence, presence of mind, determination, and courage, all of which are a part of any code of personal morals; (2) the recognition of the rights of others, altruism, fairness, self-sacrifice, all of which are basic in any system of social ethics; and (3) enthusiasm, aspiration, zest, and joy, which are no small part of religion itself.

#### THE NEED OF PLAY AND RECREATION IN RURAL LIFE

**To Guarantee Physical Development and Fitness.**—The conviction held by many rural parents that play is nothing more than a substitute for exercise and work has deprived countless rural children of the benefits of play just discussed. "All work and no play" not only "makes Jack a dull boy," but robs him of the opportunity to develop into complete physical manhood. The husky farm boy no longer excels the play-trained city boy in college athletics. During the war it was found that farm-reared recruits were slower to respond to the stimuli of play, and that they became fatigued more quickly than the city-reared recruit in the activities which required the use of the entire body. Farm boys and girls do not develop either symmetrical bodies or good neuromuscular coordination, for farm work develops the heavy or major muscles at the expense of the minor muscles; furthermore, this ensuing asymmetry of bodily function may contribute to ill health.

In pioneer days when the farmer was also a hunter, his senses were quickened by his experiences in the woods and along the streams; but now that farm life has become more sedentary, more mechanical, and more repetitious, his senses are not as well trained as they once were. In city life, an occupation may be even more mechanical, routine and stable than farming; but once outside the factory gate, every sense must be alive to the teeming, changing, stimulating environment. Leisure hours in the city are filled far more with challenging stimuli to thought and action than are

work hours; the reverse is true in country life. Leisure time in the city is organized to afford the balance necessary after the routine physical activities of work hours, and this balance should be achieved for country people through organized recreation.

**To Develop Mental Growth.**—The city child is almost always more precocious than the country child. This may be either good or bad, but the possibility of its being good warrants its consideration. Lack of diversified association and stimuli often makes the country child seem stupid. He may have health, vigor, and abundant energy, but lack sufficient opportunities for the release of energy through activity. Running with a dog, riding a stick horse, climbing trees, or wandering over fields are all very well, but to have no other opportunities for play and recreation leaves the rural child deficient in human experience and consequently without stimuli to certain kinds of thinking. Modern child psychology indicates that nothing in child life so blights normal living as the repression of natural emotions.

Furthermore, play stimulates and enlivens the emotions, introduces spontaneity and pleasure into life, opens the mind to all kinds of aspirational imagination, and thus creates experiences in and of itself. The rural child needs all this in order to capitalize the potential energy developed in him by sunshine, air and freedom. Rural people are too often emotionally stolid and stagnant, or morose and even sordid. Although this may be preferable to the emotional instability of some city people, it is neither necessary nor desirable, and such shortcomings can be rectified by diversified and directed play.

The country boy often excels in college studies, but it is because of his doggedness, and not his mental alertness. City-bred recruits in the army camps were found to excel country-bred men in activities demanding mental alertness. The adult farmer is often suspicious of others, chiefly because he does not trust his own mental alertness in dealing with an outsider. Play and games develop the mental characteristics he lacks—alertness, initiative, precision and self-confidence—and add to his experience the things of which his isolation and independence of living have deprived him.

**To Develop Social, Cooperative, or Group Technique.**—People are naturally gregarious, they are drawn into groups because they want the emotional satisfactions which come only from

association with others, and it is largely from these associations that personality is developed. Rural people have always lacked opportunities for social contacts, and for this reason they find it difficult to cooperate in economic enterprises, their imagination is often feeble, their judgment is narrow, and bitter hostilities often develop in rural communities. Play, especially group and team play, is the best antidote to these conditions. Agriculture is a family enterprise and will probably always be carried on in relative isolation by a group no larger than the family. Consequently the broader and more cosmopolitan experiences can be secured only through institutional life outside the family group—through marketing and leisure-time activities—and for this, community play and recreation offer one of the best opportunities.

Furthermore, play draws people together in the attainment of common ends, differences of opinion and temperament are merged in the common consciousness and achievement. This is valuable not only in itself, but in its influence on other activities of life. C. O. Gill, a former captain of the Yale football team and a man who has long worked among rural people, is quoted by Dr. Warren H. Wilson as follows: "The reason why farmers cannot cooperate lies in the fact that they did not play when they were boys. They never learned team work. They cannot yield to one another, or surrender themselves to a common purpose."<sup>1</sup>

Both animals and human beings play in one way or another, and to this rural people are no exception, but rural sports, like rural economic enterprises, have been individualistic. For this reason, the type of play most needed in rural districts is that which demands and teaches cooperation and team work. If adult farmers had the same loyalty and enthusiasm for the success of their community's programs that school and college students have for their athletic teams, many aspects of rural community life that demand group action and group loyalty would be greatly benefited.

The Institute of Social and Religious Research made a study of the preferences for various types of play, and this study is significant for many reasons. For one thing, it shows that rural young people, even more than urban young people, prefer play that demands association and team work. Their choices combine

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<sup>1</sup> Wilson, Warren H., *Evolution of the Country Community*, The Pilgrim Press, Boston, 1912, p. 195.

things which are generally well known to them, but which rural life lacks, and which give an opportunity for association with other children. Tables 107 and 108 rank the choices of boys and girls, respectively.

TABLE 107—SUMMARY OF RECREATION CHOICES OF COUNTRY AND VILLAGE BOYS\*

Recreation	Country	Village
Swimming	267	325
Hunting	226	219
Baseball	267	361
Reading	190	227
Basketball	167	210
Fishing	164	193
Football	152	216
Tennis	66	122
Athletics	56	87
Dancing	45	75
Horseback riding	60	57
Camping	37	52
Hiking	29	81
Movies	25	34
Skating	24	33
Track	22	24
Music	19	37
Motoring	16	25
Bicycle riding	11	8
Traveling	9	4
Rowing	9	9
Boxing	8	16
Golf	8	9
Drawing	6	4
Singing	5	3
Parties	5	16
Wrestling	5	3
Volley ball	6	11
Billiards	4	14
Cards	4	10
Picnics	3	4
Gym work	3	5
Band	2	2
Croquet	2	4
Scouting	3	7

Table 109, which represents the choice of 3040 village boys

\* The information for Tables 107 and 108 was supplied by the Institute of Social and Religious Research, New York City

## 504 THE PROBLEM OF RURAL RECREATION

TABLE 108.—SUMMARY OF RECREATION CHOICES OF COUNTRY AND VILLAGE GIRLS

Recreation	Country	Village
Reading	520	651
Swimming	264	398
Basketball	194	232
Riding	192	157
Dancing	199	314
Tennis	119	244
Hiking	113	247
Auto	90	94
Baseball	85	101
Walking	74	89
Piano	61	62
Music	65	84
Movies	51	91
Volley ball	45	54
Skating	43	74
Athletics	43	27
Sewing	35	57
Camping	34	28
Out-door sports	37	15
Fishing	37	22
Auto driving	18	28
Boating	17	7
Picnicking	16	27
Theater	14	14
Games	13	14
Singing	12	13
Cooking	12	13
Sports	12	13
Writing	11	7
Croquet	11	6
Housework	10	10
Practice music	9	4
Small garden	9	1
Parties	8	21
Running	8	5
Bathing	7	4
Travel	6	21
Drawing	6	9
Pancy work	6	12

and 2119 country boys, shows that rural boys desire sports which demand team play even more than city boys do. It is the very sports preferred by the rural youths in the average open-country community which are most handicapped by lack of numbers, recreational facilities, and play supervision, the individualized sports,

TABLE 109.—PLAY CHOICES OF COUNTRY AND VILLAGE BOYS<sup>a</sup>

	Village	Actual Country Boys' Choice	If Country Boys' Choice Yielded Those of Village Boys <sup>a</sup>
Baseball	361	267	253
Football	216	152	151
Camping	52	37	35
Track	24	22	16
Volley ball	11	6	8

<sup>a</sup> There were almost seven-tenths as many choices of country boys as of village boys. Column three indicates the country boys' choices if the two groups had been equal.

which they place fairly well down the list, are the only ones possible if they are to play at all.

A quotation from a paper read by Lawrence S. Hill before the Physical Education Department of the National Education Association at Pittsburgh, in 1918, provides a good conclusion to this section.

To sum up these needs, we may say that the rural child requires a special type of activity. It is useless to preach morality, self-control, recognition of the rights of others, altruism, self-confidence, determination, loyalty, cooperation, courage, skill, and a host of other attributes, which the individual should acquire in school, if mere preaching is all that is attempted. It is necessary to give the individual opportunity to learn these valuable lessons for himself, and this he can do through normal, directed activity better than he can in any other way. Children need activities intended to promote health and body, as well as moral discipline; activities for the health and happiness of all boys and girls at the same time as the mental and moral training. They need to realize the obligations to the society in which they live, and to have a readiness of spirit and body to meet those obligations in daily life. They need to be made conscious of the fact that it is not for themselves alone that they sing patriotic songs, perform daily drills, play games, and undergo health examinations, but for themselves as happier, healthier, more efficient members of the community in which they live.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>a</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> Quoted from Phelan, J., *Readings in Rural Sociology*, The Macmillan Company, New York, 1920, pp. 233-234.

## THE DIFFICULTY IN GETTING RECREATION INTO RURAL LIFE

**Some Rural Attitudes Averse to Recreation.**—Probably the chief difficulty in furnishing adequate play opportunities in the open country has been the fact that many rural people are averse to play, they regard it only as a time filler, or even a time killer, and it conflicts with their almost universal idea of work. Too much play has been looked upon as immoral, and therefore contrary to their religious ideas and convictions. Furthermore, the philosophy of life developed by the economic struggle in which practically all rural people have engaged, regards remunerative work alone as righteous and condemns pleasure seeking and merry-making. The writer remembers that, as a boy of fifteen, he was actually distressed when his parents considered retiring, after forty years of hard pioneer farm work, he suspected a distinct moral weakness in a younger sister who, after a strenuous forenoon at the family washing, insisted on reading during the afternoon; he remembers also that his father, a liberal thinker on religious matters, rebuked him sternly one Sunday morning for looking longingly out of the window at some neighbor boys skating on the ice in the hog lot.

The church also has frowned upon play, and ministers of the past have been almost universally opposed to all kinds of sports, condemning not only dancing and card playing, but all forms of organized recreation—particularly any "violation of the Sabbath," the only day of comparative leisure for many farm families. The church as a whole has until recently been strenuously opposed to all amusement and recreation, and the country church has been slower than the city church to break away from this feeling.

An inquiry on rural child welfare, made in West Virginia by the National Child Labor Committee, reports that again and again such statements as "We don't believe in play" were heard. The quotations which follow are taken from this report:

"One hale and hearty and fairly prosperous farmer averred, with the accent on the ego, '*I* never played when *I* was a boy.' Others not so hale and hearty or prosperous or quite so self-satisfied, made the same statement. There was Abe Fowler, for instance, who said, 'Boys don't need no time to play. When they ain't workin' they oughtta be sleepin', I reckon.' Another man said of his boys, 'There's plenty of work for 'em and no time for

foolishness.' Another, 'I've got a place for my boy to play—cutting sprouts and weeds—and wet days he c'n get wood.' "

"We never give 'em time to play."

"Our children never bother with games."

"We don't fool with any fool thing like that."

"I raised my children in the holler, and they didn't l'arn any of that nonsense."

"I don't like to see children put in time on games like dominoes I'd as soon see 'em play cards."<sup>5</sup>

These attitudes may seem extreme, as indeed they are in some rural sections, but they still prevail in others and were once almost universal among rural people. The "work attitude," whereby all play becomes a wasteful activity, and the "puritan attitude," whereby all pleasure is sin, have done more to retard the play movement in the open country than any other one thing; and because of their lingering presence many rural communities are still opposed—or passive at best—to the introduction of organized recreation

**Insufficient Number of People for Organized Play.**—In at least twenty rural sociology classes, the writer has asked how many country boys have never played organized baseball, football, or basket ball, and in practically every class the majority had not. There were always two explanations: "We didn't have enough boys to play those games," and "We had no grounds and equipment." Before the day of the automobile and the consolidated school, it was almost impossible to find a group of rural boys of approximately the same age who got together often enough to make these organized games possible; furthermore, the one-room school with its acre of uneven ground left little room for such games. The writer has seen dozens of rural schools built in the timber, with less than fifty square feet of land cleared for play space, or on a steep hillside where even tag was dangerous. There was apparently no thought of providing adequate play space when the school ground was laid out and land was cheap or even free. Now land and play equipment are expensive, and taxes are high; and as a result only the rural children who can attend consolidated schools have an opportunity for organized and supervised play

<sup>5</sup> Clopper, E. N., *Rural Child Welfare*, by permission of The Macmillan Company, New York, 1922, pp. 147, 149.



Adults have likewise been deprived of many worth-while forms of recreation because of their isolation, for before the telephone and automobile became general it was difficult to get people together even for picnics and similar gatherings, such forms of recreation being confined almost exclusively to national holidays. The telephone has made it easier to plan such occasions, and the automobile has facilitated attending them; but the inauguration of play programs in rural districts is still difficult because of the lack of space for play and the inertia resulting from generations of life without play.

According to a survey of 1014 farm families in North Carolina, no member of 18 per cent of them had attended a community recreational event during the preceding year, and only 17.1 per cent had attended as many as four such events during that time;<sup>6</sup> and substantially the same conditions were shown by a survey of 426 farm families in southeastern Missouri.<sup>7</sup> These conditions are even more general in many of the mountain regions and more sparsely settled sections of the country. Although the Missouri and North Carolina sections which were studied are not typical of the country as a whole, they do represent thousands of rural communities, and the indication is that the handicaps and inertia of a few generations ago are still present in large sections of rural society today. On the other hand, when rural groups do meet together, there is usually a personal or neighborly relationship which is not found in the commercial and impersonal recreational events of many cities.

### THE EVOLUTION OF PLAY IN RURAL COMMUNITIES

**The Play of Pioneers and Early Settlers.**—Play, including the ~~forms~~ of activity, the attitudes toward it, and the growth of the facilities for it, has developed along with the other activities of rural life, but it has been retarded because of the conditions just discussed.

The play of our pioneer grandfathers was vastly different from that of today, for it was the result partly of the need for group work. There were certain tasks which the members of a single family could not handle alone; neighbors came in to help, and the occasion became a play time before it ended. Whole families

<sup>6</sup> Taylor, C. C., and Zimmerman, C. C., *op. cit.*, pp 76-81.

<sup>7</sup> Study by the author, unpublished

were taken to "barn raisings" and "log rollings" because such events satisfied their social hunger; furthermore, it was neither desirable nor safe to leave the women and children at home alone. The "barn raising" was concluded with a "barn dance"; the "log rolling" or "wood chopping" was turned into a barbeque, and the "corn husking," into a "husking bee." Other similar occasions were the "sugar making," "quiltings and rag sewings," "round-ups," etc. Every member of the family participated; sometimes everybody, regardless of age, played the same game, and sometimes each age group played by itself.

The harvesting and shelling gangs which supplied heavy labor also afforded opportunities for association and visiting. "Harvest festivals" were often held at the end of the harvest season; although these were sometimes almost religious ceremonials, they were more often pure "jollifications." Another opportunity for a helpful and happy gathering was a big basket dinner at the home of someone who because of illness had been unable to do his own harvesting. Rural people can sincerely regret the passing of these occasions, for they were fraught with fellowship, merriment and genuine neighborliness.

The isolation of the pioneer developed a form of recreation and limited association which had distinctive features not found elsewhere today. Such were the "sleigh rides," "hay-rack rides," "horseback riding," and the family visit—forms of recreation more popular today among city than country people.

With the advent of institutional life—the school and church—there developed the "box supper," the "oyster supper," the old-fashioned "singing school," the "spelling match," the "literary society," and the "school exhibition." Camp meetings, revival meetings, and even the monthly preaching became gala occasions for the pioneer, and these forms of recreation are still found in many rural districts today. The "fiddling contests" of the south, the "rodeo" and riding contests of the west, the "ski tourneys" of the north, "turkey shootings," and the other similar activities which have existed in practically every rural section of America, all show the tendency of people everywhere to play, and to play in terms of their environment.

The characteristic features of pioneer recreation were that it mobilized practically the whole community, and that whenever the idea of contest entered, it was on a purely individual basis. Every

district had its "crack shot," its "champion wrestler," its "champion wood chopper," its "best rider," its "best break-down fiddler," its "bully" or "best man", the greatness of even the pioneer preacher depended on his ability to "outbellow" his denominational rivals. Furthermore, pioneer celebrations were planned for months in advance, thus furnishing great pleasure in anticipation and heightening the importance of the event itself. Pioneer lives were lived in isolation and were somewhat melancholy, and the tests of individual prowess and the rollicking abandon of their recreation afforded the joy of conquest, on the one hand, and an emotional release from their comparative solitude, on the other.

**The Characteristics of Present-day Rural Play and Recreation.**—It is difficult to classify the periods of the development of rural play for two reasons (1) there have been no outstanding events which have brought about a drastic change in the forms and habits of recreation, and (2) recreation in rural communities varies all the way from that of the pioneers to the play programs and equipment of the present day. However, rural attitudes toward play and the forms of rural play have definitely been altered by the change in the rural situation itself. For example, the improvement of the facilities for transportation and communication has put rural people in touch with what is happening in the city. Rural communities are now aware of the organized forms of recreation which have been developing in city life for two generations. Farm machinery has increased the amount of leisure time. Larger groups of children have been thrown together by the consolidation of thousands of rural schools; and this, together with the fact that the consolidated school usually provides an adequate auditorium and playground, has stimulated community gatherings and play and entertainment programs. Rural people are reading more than they formerly did because they are better educated and because the rural free delivery makes newspapers and periodicals available. All these things have lessened the isolation—both physical and social—of rural people, have drawn them into contact with one another, and have provided them with at least some equipment for play.

The results of these changes in the rural situation and the consequent change in the rural attitude toward play are twofold. Although a certain amount of organization has been introduced into rural play, in many places the old forms of play have been

discarded and only sedentary commercialized recreation provided as a substitute. Rural boys may at one time have known only those sports which pitted one individual against another, but this is far better than no play at all, which is the case today with many of them. Country girls may have been boisterous in their play, but even that is better than the "movie fans" and "joy riders" of the present. But no one is to be criticized too severely for taking advantage of commercialized forms of recreation, for shrewd business men sensed the wide demand for recreation before the public did, and provided forms of play for which the public is willing to pay well. Certainly not all play can be non-commercial. For instance, in order to insure its success, it was necessary to commercialize the Chautauqua, until quite recently one of the great events in rural life, and the same is true of other types of recreation. The trouble is not that play costs money, but that the play thus offered is not always wholesome and recreative. As far as recreation is concerned, many rural communities are in a transitional stage midway between the individual contests and the "bees" of pioneer days and the definitely organized community recreation of today; and this is one of the best reasons for hastening the spread of the modern play movement in rural areas.

**An Adequate and Wholesome Rural Recreation Program.**—Now that we have discussed the value of play, the type indulged in by rural people, and its rôle in compensating for the shortcomings of rural life, let us consider what an adequate and wholesome rural recreation program would be. In a paper read before the American Country Life Association in Chicago in 1919, E. C. Lindeman presented the following as desirable forms of recreation for rural people.

1. To develop the balance or symmetry so often lacking, because of habitual work activities of rural people
  - (a) Games which involve the free use of the entire body
  - (b) Games which require procession of action
  - (c) Games employing the expression of the rhythmic instinct.
2. For psycho-physiological development
  - (a) Games which involve cooperative action
  - (b) Games which involve attention or the use of the higher nerve centers
  - (c) Games which are mentally exhilarating<sup>8</sup>

<sup>8</sup> Lindeman, E. C., in *Proceedings, Second National Country Life Conference*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1919, pp. 118-136.

He then suggested that such forms of recreation as group games, organized athletics, folk dancing and community singing are necessary to bring about these two types of development. He listed good games for the open country as those "(1) that are safe to health, (2) in which small, as well as large, numbers may participate, (3) which may be played by both young and old, (4) which may be played by both sexes, (5) which require a minimum of equipment, (6) which emphasize the instinct of cooperation, and (7) which grow out of the life of the people in conjunction with the community environment."<sup>9</sup>

These generalizations supply the basic principles and also offer some concrete suggestions for developing a recreation program in a rural community. But it should be emphasized that an elaborate year-round program and expensive playgrounds and equipment are not vital in the development of play and recreation in rural districts, for when the value of play is once recognized by rural people, it will be developed in the home, at school, at church, in the open country and in connection with town life. Music and art will be stimulated;<sup>10</sup> dramatics and pageantry, picnics, county field days and similar celebrations will be used as a means of spending leisure time constructively. The folk dances and songs which developed originally in rural districts can easily be brought back into vogue. Community buildings and country parks will begin to appear. Hunting, fishing, swimming, riding, nature study, afford rural people a chance to play. The open country is rich in possibilities for play, and leisure time has increased. What rural people need is education in play and the value of it, the small amount of equipment necessary will follow, and expert leaders will direct them in a kind of play that is healthful, wholesome and enjoyable.

#### AGENCIES OF RURAL RECREATION

**Play in Connection with the Home.**—In the country, the home is far more a social entity than it is in the city, where hundreds of other agencies are competing for the time and attention of its members. Games, music and reading, and vacations and camping trips shared by the entire family offer great opportunities for constructive leisure-time programs for the rural family. L. H. Bailey, of Cornell University, contends that every farm should

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>10</sup> Art of all kinds, as recreation, is discussed in the following chapter.

have at least one-half acre near the house for use as a playground for the children, where croquet, tennis, volley ball and similar games can be played, and where a sand-box can be located; a room in the house or barn should be fixed up for play on rainy days

The problems of the rural home in connection with play are: (1) to make possible even more leisure time; (2) to develop in the parents an appreciation of the value of play in the child's character and personality development, (3) to make good reading accessible; (4) to relieve the monotony and the restricted contacts of an isolated life, and (5) to provide play space and equipment

**Play in Connection with the School.**—The most widely adopted type of play program is being developed in connection with schools, and this will probably be the case for some time to come, for most people think of childhood as the time for play. The close relation between play and educational technique, especially in dealing with children, is being more widely recognized. Large numbers of children of the same age are now assembled in centralized and consolidated schools, play space and equipment are most easily supplied in these schools, which are public property and under paid supervision. For example, New York State has provided that any district or a combination of districts may employ a supervisor of physical training, the state contributing one-half the salary up to \$600 per year. There are state interscholastic athletic leagues in several states, notable among which are Texas, North Carolina, and Maryland. In Texas this work is directed by the Extension Division of the University of Texas, and the program is carried out through the schools, these leagues penetrate the smallest and most isolated communities, and include children of all ages. Legislation permitting the use of school facilities for social and recreational purposes has been passed by twenty-five states, and four others are accomplishing outstanding results in providing recreation through schools. A few years ago the North Carolina Department of Education inaugurated a supervised traveling play system. Trucks were equipped with complete moving picture outfits; the driver operated the motion picture machine, and there was a young woman to direct the children's play. Each truck made a regular circuit of five schools per week, thus affording supervised play for the children during the afternoon, and moving pictures and often other features for the entire community at night.

## 514 THE PROBLEM OF RURAL RECREATION

In his study of consolidated schools, Hayes found athletic fields connected with 43.1 per cent of them in Louisiana, with 45 per cent in Mississippi, and with 56.5 per cent in Alabama. In addition to athletics, these schools promoted other recreational activities to the extent shown in Table 110.

TABLE 110.—PERCENTAGE OF SCHOOLS IN WHICH VARIOUS EVENTS WERE HELD DURING THE YEAR<sup>11</sup>

	Per Cent of Schools in Louisiana	Per Cent of Schools in Mississippi	Per Cent of Schools in Alabama
Fairs	10.3	22.5	23.5
Community dances	17.2	2.5	10.9
Athletic games	39.7	40.0	41.3
Picnics, box suppers, barbecues, and banquets	22.4	35.0	45.6
School plays and entertainments	24.1	12.5	32.6
Boy Scouts	3.4		
Pageants	1.7		
Literary Society	32.7	37.5	34.7
Moving pictures	5.1		
Lyceum courses	13.7	7.5	
Singing, public lectures		12.5	2.2
Boys' and girls' clubs	27.6	37.5	50.0

Hundreds of cases could be cited where schools are providing both play equipment and facilities, and supervised play. The United States Bureau of Education now publishes and distributes bulletins giving rural school people all the information necessary on the means and methods of providing recreation for school children as well as for those not in school. These bulletins suggest the use of school equipment on Saturdays and holidays, the enlargement of school play space, the introduction of play into the curriculum and the introduction of standards of sport efficiency, in addition, they give elaborate information on games and the equipment necessary for each one.<sup>12</sup> Undoubtedly another decade will see play included in every school program and hence extended to the rest of the rural population.

<sup>11</sup> Hayes, A. W., "The Community Value of the Consolidated Rural School," *Research Bulletin No. 2*, Tulane University, New Orleans, February, 1923.

<sup>12</sup> For examples of this service, see United States Bureau of Education, *Bulletin No. 40*, 1913, and *Bulletin No. 45*, 1921.

The following is a summary of the major advantages in the use of the school for rural recreation and play. (1) it has control of a great part of the children's time during their playing age; (2) it is a central meeting place owned by the people and supported by their taxes, (3) it either provides, or can provide, the space, equipment and supervision necessary for constructive recreation, (4) it can help in the wider recognition of play as a part of education, and (5) by expanding the use of its space and equipment, it can become the recreational center of the entire community.

**Play in Connection with the Church.**—For a generation, churches have used suppers and socials—one form of recreation—for raising money and attracting people. However, they are now rapidly changing their attitude toward the whole question of play, for many of them, having reached the conviction that there are spiritual, ethical and moral values in play itself, are making it a part of their regular program. However, the church is less well adapted than the school in promoting play and recreational events because it has neither the personnel nor the space for these activities, furthermore, it is usually denominational and hence does not reach the entire community.

In *The Little Town*, H P Douglass tells of a church in Montana, whose community parish house, managed by a board of representative directors, is open to every resident of the town. The parish house provides a reading room, a game room, and rest rooms, a gymnasium and baths for men, women and children, and it promotes athletics and clubs of all kinds.<sup>13</sup> In *The New Country Church Building*, E de S Brunner presents a plan whereby a church can meet the social needs of a small community with limited means by equipping rooms in the parsonage for social uses.<sup>14</sup>

Church papers, agricultural journals and national periodicals have for the past few years given many examples of definite recreational programs which have been developed by rural ministers and rural churches. Recreation is today quite generally a part of the program of ministers' conferences, and courses in play and

<sup>13</sup> Douglass, H P, *The Little Town*, The Macmillan Company, New York, 1919

<sup>14</sup> Brunner, E de S, *The New Country Church Building*, Missionary Education Movement, New York, 1916



recreation are also offered, as a rule, the plans for new churches include recreational and social rooms. This tendency, by no means universal among churches, is nevertheless making its contribution to the rural play movement in a changed attitude toward play and recreation.

To summarize, the church can make the following contributions: (1) it can preach the spiritual, moral and ethical values of play; (2) it can provide the place and the equipment for social gatherings of the whole community, and (3) it can direct play, if this is not already being done adequately by other agencies.

**Community Field Days.**—Community field days are promoted by the Y.M.C.A., the National Recreation Association, and the leaders of clubs for boys and girls. Amenia, a community in New York State, affords an outstanding example of this activity. In 1910 a Field Day was inaugurated as an experiment in rural cooperative recreation, and it proved so successful that each year this community invites the whole countryside to one day of free wholesome recreation, from which are eliminated all the objectionable features of the typical carnival. In doing this, the community has in mind the following principles. (1) Make the country as attractive socially as the city is, (2) teach country boys and girls how to play, for they have forgotten how; (3) encourage everyone to play instead of merely watching others, (4) get boys interested in honest and healthy sports, thus keeping them from drink and other dissipation, (5) teach that play is just as necessary as work, and (6) make community festivals not only *for* the people, but *of* and *by* the people. This project, now incorporated as "The Amenia Field Day Association," is managed by a board of thirty directors, both men and women, membership is open to all the residents of the surrounding country, and the dues are \$1.00 per year. The Y.M.C.A., the County Farm Bureau, the Grange, the Boy Scouts, ministers and school teachers cooperate in this project. Both group and competitive games are played, and there is a parade of floats. "Drinks" and "eats" are sold on the grounds, and there are many basket-dinner picnics. The field day attracted 3000 people in 1910, and over 10,000 in 1913.<sup>15</sup>

Similar projects are now being promoted by Granges, Farmers' Unions, and Farm Bureaus; and if the demand for play places

<sup>15</sup> Adapted from Burr, W., *Rural Organization*, The Macmillan Company, New York, 1921, pp. 204-208.

and parks which these projects create is great enough, counties and states will undoubtedly soon provide them.

**Other Agencies.**—Table III lists a rather wide variety of the agencies in rural communities in Ohio which furnish play and recreational opportunities for rural people, and similar agencies are active throughout the country as a whole.

TABLE III — PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL RURAL COMMUNITIES IN OHIO HAVING CERTAIN SOCIAL AGENCIES, AND THE TOTAL NUMBER OF EACH IN THE STATE<sup>14</sup>

	Per Cent	Total Number
Number trade area rural communities, 1272	100	878
Grange	69	2233
Lodges	55	955
Pool halls	42	627
Annual Chautauquas or lyceum	33	
Open societies	26	312
Moving picture theaters	23	282
Band	22	250
Orchestra	19	383
Public dance hall	19	238
Local newspaper	16	138
Girl Scouts or Camp Fire Girls' troop	13	163
Boy Scout troop	12	124
Annual homecoming	10	145
Parent-teacher association	9	120
Annual picnic or festival	9	102
Local library	7	94
Farmers' club or community club	7	22
Annual corn, fruit, or dairy show	6	83
Chorus or singing society	6	75
Community fair	5	

The government, through its various branches—local, state, and national—can furnish parks and playgrounds, libraries, community houses, and physical directors for community or school. As the play movement grows, the government will probably in the future play an even greater rôle in the promotion and development of rural recreation than it does at present. Farm extension agents, particularly those engaged in 4-H Club work, can promote recreation events and conduct vacation camps. A few agricultural college extension divisions now employ experts in play, pageantry, and drama.

<sup>14</sup> Lively, E. C., *op cit.*, p. 46.

## 518 THE PROBLEM OF RURAL RECREATION

Farmers' organizations, such as the Grange, the Farmers' Union, the Equity, the Farm Bureau and many others less well known, are providing recreation for country people. Boys' and girls' club work, as part of the agricultural college's extension program, are also doing this through their camps, field days and picnics.

The Boy Scouts of America, the Girl Scouts, the Camp Fire Girls, the County Work Department of the Y M C.A., and the National Board of the Y.W.C.A., the Junior Department of the American Red Cross, the National Child Labor Committee and, to some extent, the Bureau of Public Health Service, and other similar agencies of nation-wide scope are all engaged in some way in promoting play and recreation programs in rural districts. Above all the others, the National Recreation Association is active in this field, for it has recently increased its staff of experts in order to serve the rural field; and in addition to conducting recreation institutes, it is now preparing planned recreation and other programs for rural community use.<sup>17</sup>

The arduous work that farm people have had to do, and the stern life they have had to live, have developed in them a philosophy of life which condemns all pleasure seeking. Play must no longer be regarded merely as a time killer or filler, but as a means of building the personality of both the individual and the community. Farm work does not develop the body symmetrically, nor does it develop the mental alertness and the cooperation which come from play and games. Rural people need recreation because they need relaxation or release from the monotony and routine of farm work, they need the social contacts and community spirit engendered by social and recreational events, and they need a recreation program for the constructive use of their leisure. The rural recreation program should make use of the materials at hand and should not hesitate to cooperate, whenever possible, with the village or town in supplying a more adequate program; it should provide play for all, and teach all to play. There are now a sufficient number of agencies and institutions so that recreation can be made available to every rural community in America, once the

<sup>17</sup> There are about twenty pamphlets and bulletins published by the National Recreation Association, 315 Fourth Avenue, New York, see especially "Rural and Small-community Recreation," and "Home-made Play Apparatus."

value of play is recognized and appreciated Play is as much a part in the child's development as education is, and as legitimate an activity as work; and its twofold purpose—the development of individual personality and of community life—is a worthy end for all life and, therefore, for rural life

### QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

- 1 Do rural people need as much recreation as city people? Give reasons for your answer
- 2 Can anything in farm work and farm life provide a satisfactory substitute for recreation?
- 3 Describe someone you know who has never played
- 4 Discuss the advantages and disadvantages in the fact that towns and cities now supply rural people with most of their recreation
- 5 What do you think of golf as a form of recreation for rural people?
- 6 What have consolidated schools done for rural recreation?
- 7 Give the best example of rural recreation you know of personally
- 8 Do you consider play and recreation sufficiently important to rural life to justify agricultural extension play specialists?
- 9 Discuss the statement "Farm boys and girls get enough exercise without playing baseball and other games, and the old people are generally too tired to play"
- 10 What play activities have disappeared from the open country, and what new ones have appeared recently?

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## 520 THE PROBLEM OF RURAL RECREATION

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## CHAPTER XXII

### RURAL ART

#### RURAL LIFE AND RURAL ART

**The Rôle and Need of Art in Rural Life.**—Gutzon Borglum, once asked by the writer to explain his cosmopolitan intellectual interests—how and why he became interested in politics, economics, history, sociology, and all the other subjects of such vital interest to the world—replied. "Why, man, such things are the very essence of art, for all art ever tries to do is to reach down into the lives of people and civilizations and lift their souls up where they can see them"

The majority of people lack a deep appreciation of art, and therefore this whole field of human experience has come to be regarded as something apart from work-a-day life. Artists themselves—or perhaps only the near artists—have encouraged this misconception by flaunting their own eccentricities and raving over unknown painters and masterpieces, of which the masses can have no appreciation. Art does not lie in the unique alone, for the unique can be incongruous and ugly as well as orderly and beautiful. Art consists in lifting the realities of life out of the commonplace into which they drift so easily, and giving them superiority over the mistakes, ugliness, and unrealities of our existence. According to Borglum, everybody is an artist to some degree, for all of us love symmetry, beauty, harmony and grandeur, and all of us love to create things. Beauty is listed by Small and Vincent as one of the six universal interests of life, the other five being health, wealth, knowledge, rightness and sociability.<sup>1</sup>

Primitive people everywhere have had their objects of beauty and grandeur; great and grand things and places have been objects of veneration and worship by all peoples—forests, mountains, rivers, the sun and moon, and, above all, the starry heavens. A love of the ocean, mountains, or broad prairies is unconsciously

<sup>1</sup> Small, A. W., and Vincent, G. E., *An Introduction to the Study of Society*, American Book Company, New York, 1894, pp. 175-177.

inculcated into the lives of those born and reared near them—a love of which such people become aware only when they can no longer look upon these natural beauties.

Human life is so dynamic, and its relationships are so complex and diversified, that society's greatest task is to establish and maintain order, symmetry and harmony in them, for we are so taken up with our own small affairs that we neglect those attributes which are universal in the world of nature. Because of this, if for no other reason, art has its place in life.

Natural beauty is more characteristic of the country than of the city, and, realizing this, cities try to secure for themselves a part of this beauty in great parks, sometimes thousands of acres in extent. But rural people need most to conserve the beauty of the country, to develop eyes to see it and souls to appreciate it, and to realize that they have always loved it and been a part of it. Lorado Taft once asked James Whitcomb Riley why most poets and artists come from the country, and Riley answered, "The country boy has to amuse himself and he lets his imagination play; and out of that comes artistry." But it is the beauty of their everyday life and surroundings upon which the imagination of these boys plays—beauty which is present for everyone but which others do not realize as beauty.

Frank A. Waugh, of Massachusetts State College, made the following statement on art in rural life: "Art is, of course, universal, and its principles are the same in the country as in the city. All we can mean, therefore, by rural art is the application of art principles to rural problems. When we reach this ground, no one can doubt that art is able to render a service to the country as much as to the city. Its purpose is to bring order and beauty in place of disorder and ugliness."<sup>2</sup>

According to this, the need for art is to bring order and beauty into rural life. The open country has a great advantage in this respect, for nature's reign is far more dominant there than it is in the city. Creation and life, hills, forests, streams, flowers and birds are part of the country, the farmer has his part in nurturing them, and the rural person who has a love for them has the spirit of art. No small part of making rural life increasingly satisfactory lies in bringing out these values in sharp contrast to the attractions offered by the city.

<sup>2</sup> Quoted from Phelan, J., *op cit*, pp. 248-249.

**Getting Beauty and Art in Rural Life.**—Lorado Taft related the following incident before the American Life Association at Springfield, Massachusetts, in 1920.

A sculptor friend of mine told me the other day that when he was visiting a farmhouse in Poland—and what he saw was typical—the women made beautiful patterns there with sand on the earthen floors, and, doing this year after year, they became very expert until they were able to create some of the most delicate effects imaginable with nothing but sand of different colors. One day, he told me, he rode in a donkey cart—or something equivalent—through the great doorway of one of these farm places and found it strangely decorated with scrolls and arabesques which reminded him of those which Dr Schlieman found in Greece. To his inquiry, "Who did this?" the reply was, "Marylka." Marylka proved to be a young peasant girl of thirteen or fourteen. It was not counted remarkable—just a part of her day's job.<sup>3</sup>

Mr. Taft then added, "Out of such things grow logically other and higher forms of art, but how are we going to evolve art from such lives as most of our people live?"

The older countries of Europe and Asia afford numerous other instances of similar tendencies to a love of beauty on the part of their people. Both France and Denmark are dotted with statues of local celebrities and events. Folk lore and folk music are present everywhere in Denmark, and her ballad music fills four thick volumes. As E. C. Branson says, "Danish life is deeply rooted in soil rich in art suggestions, traditions, interests, impulses, and achievements," and he relates the following personal experience.

On my way out of town the next morning, I happened to glance down a side street and lo, a great fountain playing twelve streams of water day and night in a tiny park set with shrubs and flowers! It was more surprising and, its history considered, far more wonderful than the great Munich fountain through which half a river runs, or the great fountain at Versailles which the state can afford to display in action only once a month.

I got the story while waiting for my train. It is the design, in stone and iron, of a young artist born and reared in Vigen, a town lad whose art instincts have had little more to feed on than the drawing lessons in the town school, the art prints and bric-a-brac in the shop windows, the Danish art magazines, art stores, and art schools, the

<sup>3</sup> *Proceedings, American Country Life Association, 1920*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, pp. 10-11.



open-air statuary, the glyptotek, and the Thorvaldsen Museum in Copenhagen. His first masterpiece was founded and erected at the expense of his native town with an appropriation by the town council, supplemented by small amounts contributed by almost everybody in Vigen.

And this thing happens in a country town of 1500 inhabitants. . . . It happens in Denmark because a youngster with a bent for art is steeped from his earliest years in a stimulating art atmosphere—in his own home, in the homes of his playmates, in his school surroundings and activities, in the bookshop windows of his native town, in the postcard racks everywhere, in the art galleries, art exhibitions, art journals and art-filled public squares, parks, and gardens of the Danish Capital.<sup>4</sup>

These quotations not only indicate our own lack of interest in rural art, as contrasted with that of European countries, but offer a clue to getting art into American rural life. We are not an art-loving nation; our civilization is dominated by trade and commerce and hence almost wholly by commercial values; furthermore, we do not think of art as a part of the life of the people, or as something arising out of their lives. Therefore, an appreciation of art will have to be taught in our schools, our churches and our homes, and we shall have to start at the beginning and develop a taste and a craving for it, as is always the case with cultural pleasures and desires. Farming will have to be looked upon as a mode of life as well as an economic occupation. Galpin suggests that an art-loving and art-appreciating philanthropist endow a Rural Art Foundation which, by taking rural art beyond the popular conception of "the man with a hoe," would elevate it to the status of other art in exhibition and competition, and, perhaps, create an American School of Rural Art.<sup>5</sup>

The University of Illinois in 1922 created an Art Extension Committee which, in addition to cooperating with local rural communities on various art projects, conducts annual art tours to the rural sections of the state and to the art centers in Chicago. This Committee also hopes to develop and circulate in rural districts exhibits of small but well selected paintings and solar prints of

<sup>4</sup> Branson, E. C., *Farm Life Abroad*, University of North Carolina Press, Chapel Hill, 1925, pp. 162-163.

<sup>5</sup> Galpin, C. J., *Rural Social Problems*, The Century Company, New York, 1924, chap. xiv.

the masterpieces.<sup>6</sup> The art movement can be extended into country districts through the medium of women's clubs, home demonstration agents, rural and village libraries, and rural schools, the promotion of plays, pageants and music will cultivate an interest in art, as will also the erection of monuments other than the stereotyped statues of war heroes.

**Getting Rural Life into Art.**—American artists have not been fair to rural life, for whenever the life and activities of rural people have been used as the subject of painting, sculpture, literature or music, it is the bent back, the drear isolation, the farmer's unsophistication, or some inanimate phase of a rural landscape that has been depicted. As Galpin says:

Let American art put itself abreast of the most patent occupation in America, abreast especially of the extraordinary advance in the occupation. [Let it] symbolize this wonderful created thing [the living product of agriculture] and commemorate the moment of joy in the farmer's life when, having made the corn and wheat leap from the dead earth, he turns over to the world food to keep man going. Once to seize the outstanding thing about present-day agriculture, once to discern the idealism in the high bred product, will be for art to forswear the hoe and to turn to the spirit of life in agriculture.

We ask for interpretation, for expression of the high emotion wrapped up in the agricultural occupation. Emotion, however, that is not all pathos. We want the glory, the exaltation, of the real achievements of the farmer depicted, cast squarely in the eye of the beholder.

We ask for a worthy symbol of agriculture to displace the hoe. We do not know what form it will take, but we trust the discerning artist's mind to create the symbol.<sup>7</sup>

Getting art into rural art and rural life into art is a reciprocal process. Rural life will not be idealized until rural people themselves love it enough to raise it above the commonplace. On the other hand, few people will believe in the "soul of the soil" or the glories of rural life as long as others belittle farming and consider the farmer and his family inferior to people in other occupations. Before a rural art can become possible in this country, a deeper appreciation of the rôle and occupation of the farmer in relation to civilization must be developed. Only after the comparatively

<sup>6</sup> Hieronymus, R. E., "Art Extension in Illinois," *Rural America*, May, 1925.

<sup>7</sup> Galpin, C. J., *Rural Social Problems*, chap. xiv.

pioneer and transient commercial era of our national life has passed may we expect the appearance of interests other than work and money; but in the meantime it is more than desirable that we, and every social agency and institution, attempt to foresee a better rural life and encourage therein the development of art, in both principles and appreciation.

#### THE DEVELOPMENT OF SCENIC ART IN RURAL LIFE

**The Countryside.**—Rural art should begin with the conservation and preservation of the beauties of nature. Landscapes have been subjects of painting through all time, but they are commonplace to the farmer, and for this reason he is often unaware of their beauty. If the beauty of rural landscapes is to be kept, forests, streams, native shrubs, and flowers must remain, and unsightly billboards, ugly dumping grounds, and similar desecrations of the countryside must be done away with. But even more is necessary, for roadside landscaping and rural parks must be developed. Some of these projects demand a definite organization for their achievement, and in such cases community, township or even county improvement associations can be organized. In this, however, rural communities will only be following the lead of the cities.

**Public Roads.**—The modern era of road building affords opportunities for transforming many country roads into highways of intrinsic beauty from which the traveler may derive artistic satisfaction, in addition to his enjoyment of a panorama of country landscapes. A road belongs to the public and is built and maintained by taxes, and it can be made an object of rural beauty if it is planted with rows and clumps of trees, if the roadside is planted to grass and flowers, if occasional vistas open up, and if ugly billboards and dumping grounds and the unsightly telephone poles and wires are eliminated.

**Public and Semi-public Grounds and Buildings.**—Public grounds and buildings have become important objects of civic beautification in cities. Although there are fewer such buildings in the rural districts, there are opportunities for developing a distinctive and high type of rural architecture in the school buildings and grounds, the churches and cemeteries, and community buildings such as Grange or Farm Union halls or general community club buildings, which are almost universal in country districts.

Strangely enough, mountain summer resorts have been quick to take advantage of these opportunities of which the residents of rural communities have for the most part been unaware. Rural life is distinctive, and rural architecture should be equally so. Instead of the many other buildings and numerous streets of urban areas, only a single road and a broad landscape have to be considered as a rule in planning public buildings for rural districts. There is no good reason why every rural school yard and churchyard should not be a small semi-public park, for artistic planting, flower beds, statues and fountains do not necessarily detract from the usefulness of either. At present, rural cemeteries offer almost the only opportunity for formal planting in country districts, and they are either eyesores or beauty spots. If the principles of art are considered in the location, organization and care of such buildings and grounds, they will become objects of pride to all their owners and to those living near them.

**Rural Homes and Farm Buildings.**—The farmhouse and the other farm buildings are the logical and easiest starting point in developing rural beauty, but literally hundreds of farm houses are not even painted—much less do they show any attempt at landscaping or other beautification. The landscape, the growing crops and grazing herds may seem picturesque to the urban dweller, but the drab, unpainted, neglected farmhouses seem depressing and forbidding—anything but picturesque and pleasing.

According to Waugh, "The building of a new farm home is one of the most important episodes in life. It should be given long, careful, and prayerful study."<sup>8</sup> The farm home and the farmstead should be located in relation to the countryside. The home should be in harmony with its surroundings and well located in relation to the other buildings; it should be carefully painted, and planted with shrubs, flowers, and climbing vines. Grass, shade trees and flowers will make the yard almost park-like, and fences, which are necessary if there are poultry and livestock, can also have a part in beautifying the home. Every farmer in the country could well take George Washington's farm home at Mount Vernon as a model of beauty.

Even when some attempt has been made at beautifying the farmhouse, it is often almost obliterated by the sorry contrast made

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<sup>8</sup> Waugh, Frank A., *Country Planning*, Harcourt, Brace and Company, New York, 1924, p. 79.

by the other farm buildings. The farmer's tasks are many and his time for them is sometimes short; as a result, the barnyard is too often a litter of old machinery, rotted straw stacks, manure piles, tumbled-down fences, and dilapidated buildings. Farm buildings should be compact, in a quadrangle if possible, and they should be painted, well kept, and free from rubbish and debris. Beauty naturally is not the first consideration in the construction of these buildings, but a little thought of it in connection with them would do much to increase the farmer's self-respect and secure the approval of the public.

#### THE DEVELOPMENT OF SOCIAL ART IN RURAL LIFE

##### **The Relationship between Social Art and Recreation.—**

The social arts—music, pageantry, and drama—are discussed in this chapter because, in addition to offering a means for social contacts and cooperation, they afford an excellent means of self-expression which, from the individual's point of view, is the essence of all art.

Throughout all time, music has been—and still is—one of the most widely appreciated forms of art, for it appeals to the emotions, offers harmony, and can be enjoyed even in isolation. The lone cowboy on the plains knows music, and it has a place where the greatest multitudes assemble. It can be almost universal in rural life, for the player piano, the Victrola, and the radio make all forms of music available.

Folk music and the "singing school," once part of the life of every rural community, have for a time practically passed, and in this rural life has suffered a distinct loss. Rural people no longer sing and whistle as much as they used to—due partly to the lack of music promotion and partly to the subtle psychological influences which are fast hurling rural life into the commercial civilization of today. The process has gone so far that in the rural home a piano is primarily a piece of furniture and a musical instrument only secondarily. Music must once again attain its former place in rural life, for its value is too great to be tossed lightly away. As the *Dakota Farmer* puts it:

Farm mothers and fathers, you want your children to have strong, healthy bodies, to be sure. But more than that, you want to create in them minds as broad as the prairies on which they live, instill therein ideals as high as the blue heavens that bend over them; and develop

souls as pure as the winds that blow between that earth and sky! There are myriad ways to do it, but one of the surest ways is to give them that thing which has been herein advocated—music.<sup>9</sup>

Music is being developed in rural communities in various ways. The World War gave it great impetus, for the programs of the numerous community meetings of that period almost always included the singing of popular camp and patriotic songs, thousands of rural boys sang in army camps and brought back with them a love of singing. Now that there is a revival of rural community life, music appears on the programs of numerous recreational events at school and church, and it is quite generally becoming a part of the school curriculum. College extension workers are promoting community and group singing, and the agricultural press is doing its part; not least important is the fact that music is being brought to rural homes by Victrolas and radios, which were purchased sometimes only as fads.

The rural home is in many ways the best place for training in music, the school cannot do everything that is necessary because of its many other activities. The rural child is free from the distractions of the city, and can therefore practice and enjoy music more fully. In this connection, the writer has been interested in the fact that, in schools attended by both urban and rural children, the latter win by far the greater number of the prizes for progress in music in the school year. This statement is based on rather extensive observation, and has always held.

The farm family needs rest and relaxation at the end of a hard day's work, and neither books, pictures, nor any other form of art can compete with dropping into an easy chair and listening to the music of the radio or Victrola, or the children playing the piano. Home singing and home orchestras afford great pleasure in rural homes and are valuable in promoting music; the development of these orchestras is not difficult, for it is easy to learn to play many wind instruments.

Community music is being developed. We may not see the revival of the folk songs which grew out of the lives of rural people, because the farmer of today belongs to the cosmopolitan world; but community sings, choral clubs and choruses, orchestras and bands are being—and should be—developed along with other com-

<sup>9</sup>"Music and the Farm Home," *Service Bulletin No. 112, The Dakota Farmer*, Aberdeen, South Dakota.

munity activities. This type of musical activity has been more general in the city, not because urban people are more musical, but because it is easier for them to assemble, and also because the expert teachers and music leaders have been located in the city, but now that automobiles and good roads have made it easy to get rural people together, we may expect to see a revival of community singing and musical festivities. The National Recreation Association has published a number of pamphlets giving information on organizing and conducting such programs, and a similar service is being rendered by several other agencies, such as college extension departments and the Y M C.A. and the Y. W. C.A.

**The Pageant.**—Although the rural pageant is not a play event to the same extent that group or competitive games are, it does have other great values, for it is recreation that combines art, play and exhibition. The pageant is a folk drama, and has long been used to present legends and historical facts. This use has recently been extended to include the portrayal of all kinds of ideals and standards of social attainment, and it has become a community's attempt to portray in dramatic form the outstanding facts in its history, and also to suggest the ideals and aspirations necessary for its further development.<sup>10</sup> Because of its highly dramatic technique and the visual form of the presentation of ideas, it is powerful in driving home these ideals—a period of history, a social situation, or the life of the community as a whole passes in review, as it were, before the eyes of the very people it wants to reach. Its message goes beyond mere historical fact to allegory and idealization, for it tries to reach the community's life and soul and, at the same time, to point to a noble aspiration in community life. Each community can produce its own pageant and thus create or develop community self-expression, for although only one person may be necessary in writing the pageant, dozens and sometimes hundreds can take part in its performance. Rural schools here and there are now writing and staging historical and allegorical pageants.

Many agencies are promoting the wider use of pageants in rural communities. For example, in 1920, Brenau College, in Gainesville, Georgia, presented *King Cotton*, an allegorical pageant designed to show the need of diversified farming in stopping the advance of the boll weevil. The extension department of the

<sup>10</sup> Atkinson, R. A., "The Community Pageant," quoted in *Extension Bulletin* No. 54, New York State College of Agriculture, Ithaca, 1922, p. 320.

New York State College of Agriculture, the American Red Cross, and the Y.W.C.A. have all assisted in developing and presenting a number of community pageants. The University of Kansas has encouraged their production in 120 rural communities, and several outstanding pageants have been presented in North Dakota under the direction of A. G. Arvold. General farm organizations like the Grange and the Farm Bureau, and several specialized farm organizations, such as cooperative marketing associations, are using pageants to depict special economic and social situations. In this connection should be mentioned the pageant recently presented by the Burley Tobacco Growers Cooperative Marketing Association, which showed the life of a tobacco community and the need of community loyalty in meeting its common marketing problems.

The following quotation is a description of one pageant presented by a community:

One locality, without the help of anyone especially gifted, made its own pageant—one so beautiful that it will be remembered to the latest day of the youngest child who saw it. An important anniversary of the town was pending, and all agreed that something should be done by way of celebration. The school teacher in the community suggested a pageant. The wise men said, "No. A street parade is the one and only fitting celebration of an historical event," and mentioned one which had been held twenty-five years before. However, six weeks before the date of the celebration, the wise men came to agree with the school teacher, and the pageant book committee went to work. Such studying of old histories, such ransacking of grandmother's attic treasures, such interesting evenings together with pencil and paper and books and ideas! There was a rich historical background—the town had been the oldest English settlement in the state, there were remnants of an Indian tribe living near, the earlier generations of white men had followed the sea, but the present, alas! looked hopelessly uninteresting—plain storekeepers and farmers and summer boarders, with a new element of people of foreign birth. But there were those on the committee who had imagination (a very necessary qualification in the making of pageants), and the last episode was so managed that it drew all the previous episodes together and made clear to the audience the meaning of the whole action. Such was the pageant at Southampton, Long Island.<sup>11</sup>

The power of the pageant in developing community spirit is seen from the following

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 326.



One incident came to my attention the other day which will illustrate how the pageant is bringing together in neighborly relations towns which have always been rivals: The tiny town of X and the village of Y were such that, when X got up a baseball game, a dance or even a Red Cross picnic, Y positively refused to participate. Of course, the same relation maintained as it does in any typical rural community. But now X and Y are rehearsing happily together in "The New Day" in neighborly felicity, for they are preparing together their own patriotic play for the audience of ten thousand of their fellow citizens who will assemble to participate with them on the Glorious Fourth! The rehearsals are being conducted in St. Thames, North Carolina, each evening as I write this, the three hundred players representing twenty-two different villages coming together by automobile from their various homes, some of them from a distance of twenty, thirty and even forty miles. It is heartening in these days of our strivings toward democracy to see such signs. It is like the fresh green of the wheat fields after the barren pilt of the winter plain!<sup>12</sup>

**Rural Drama and Folk Plays.**—Plays and other types of dramatic performances are being given under various auspices in thousands of rural communities. Frederick Koch names the following states as having made a start in this direction: "California, Colorado, Nevada, Utah, Montana, Texas, Arizona, New Mexico, Kansas, Missouri, Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, Georgia, North Carolina, Virginia, North Dakota, Minnesota, Wisconsin, New York, New Hampshire, Massachusetts and Maine."<sup>13</sup>

The most outstanding work in this field is probably that being done in North Dakota, North Carolina, Wisconsin and New York, which will be described more fully later. Although there are other institutions and agencies which are working for rapid advancement in this field of rural art and recreation, the North Dakota and North Carolina groups, under the direction of Arvold and Koch, respectively, are the most outstanding, and the work of these two men bids fair to develop real folk plays in this country.

The New York State College of Agriculture, through its Rural Organization Department, offers expert advice and, in addition, copies of plays from which to choose. The Agricultural College of

<sup>12</sup> Quoted from Frederick H. Koch, of the University of North Carolina, in *Rural and Small Community Recreation*, National Recreation Association, New York, 1921, p. 100.

<sup>13</sup> Koch, Frederick H., "Towards a New Folk Theatre," *Quarterly Journal of the University of North Dakota*, Grand Forks, 1930, p. 11.

Utah gives instructions for the production of plays in country districts and, through its Community Service Bureau, issues lists of suitable plays, and the University of Wisconsin also offers a similar service. The National Recreation Association is active in this field, as are numerous local institutions, Granges, Farm Bureaus, and similar organizations. The Ohio Agricultural College, the New York State College of Agriculture, and Hampton Institute (Negro) all give plays during their Farmers' Weeks.

#### SPECIALIZED EFFORTS IN DEVELOPING RURAL ART

**The Little Country Theatre in North Dakota.**—The Little Country Theatre is a room in one of the buildings on the campus of North Dakota College of Agriculture at Fargo, but the Little Country Theatre Movement is an illustration of the encouragement of creative art in the lives of thousands of rural people. A. G. Arvold, its founder, speaks of its influence as follows:

Physically speaking, The Little Country Theatre is located on the second floor of the administration building of the North Dakota Agricultural College, Fargo, North Dakota. Spiritually, its influence extends into practically every community in the Commonwealth, into every state in the Union, throughout North and South America, Europe and even the Orient . . . The Theatre is a most unique and interesting place to visit. Once a dingy, dull-gray chapel, today it is a cheerful country life laboratory, where all sorts of programs are tried out—a Mecca where country folks and city folks alike meet to discuss and to suggest ways and means to make life in the open country or the town in which they live more attractive, more interesting and more human.<sup>14</sup>

The conception of the idea was described as follows in a pamphlet written by Arvold some ten years earlier than the one just quoted:

My story is simple. It is a narrative on a work in the promotion and establishment of community centers in country districts. The scene is laid out on a Dakotah prairie where seven out of every eight people are classed as rural. . . . They live in a land whose area comprises seventy-one thousand square miles of rich black soil. The vocation of these people is agriculture. . . .

Because of the stupid monotony of the village and country exist-

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<sup>14</sup> Arvold, Alfred G., *The Little Country Theatre*, published by the author, Fargo, North Dakota, 1928.

ence, due to the fact that the people in the country have not found their social expression in the neighborhood, the tendency has been for both young and old to move to large cities. . . . That something fundamental must be done along social lines in the country in order to help people find themselves nobody will dispute. . . . The impulse of building up a community spirit in a rural neighborhood may come from without, but the true genuine work of the socialization of the country itself must come from within .

After careful study of hundreds and literally thousands of requests received during the last nine years from every section of the state of North Dakota as well as America for suitable material for presentation on public programs and at public functions, with a personal acquaintance with hundreds of young men and women, whose homes are in small communities and country districts, the idea of The Little Country Theatre was conceived. The idea conceived became an actual reality, when an old dingy chapel on the second floor of the administration building at the North Dakota Agricultural College located at Fargo, North Dakota, was remodeled into what is known as The Little Country Theatre. It is simply a large playhouse put under a reducing glass and is just the size of an average country town hall. The decorations are plain and simple, the color scheme being green and gold. . . . It is an example of what can be done with hundreds of village halls, unused portions of school houses, garrets and basements in country homes and country churches . . .

The object of The Little Country Theatre is to produce such plays and community programs as can be easily staged in a country church basement, a country school, in the sitting room of a farm home, in the village or town hall, or any place where people assemble for social betterment. Its principal function is to stimulate an interest for good clean drama and original entertainment among the people living in the open country and villages, in order to help them find themselves that they may become better satisfied with the community in which they live. .

The work of The Little Country Theatre has more than justified its existence. It has produced scores of plays and community programs. The people who have participated in them seem to have caught the spirit. . . .

Perhaps four of the most interesting incidents which have occurred in connection with the work of The Little Country Theatre are the presentation of *A Farm Home Scene in Iceland Thirty Years Ago*, *The Prairie Wolf*, *Back to the Farm*, and *A Bee in a Drone's Hive*. All of these productions have come out of the country people themselves. Standing room was at a premium. The Little Country

Theatre could not hold the crowds, eighty per cent of them farmers who were eager to see the drama of their own creation. . . .

The influence of The Little Country Theatre in the state, as well as the nation, has been far reaching. Scarcely a day passes but somebody writes asking for data in regard to it, or for copies of plays, and matter for presentation on public programs. . . . During the past few years in North Dakota hundreds of people, young and old, have participated in home talent productions and community programs. Thousands of pieces of play matter and pamphlets have been lent to individuals, literary societies, farmers' clubs, civic clubs, and other organizations. . . .

The future work of The Little Country Theatre lies not only in schoolhouse, the village hall, the farm home, and the basement of a country church. The cheap carnival at the county fair must be supplanted by the Harvest Festival in which all the people of the county take an interest and have a part. The farmers' picnic must contain something more than a brass band and a baseball game. These two splendid features must be maintained, but the pageant, a community play, in which the story of life is told, must become as much a part of the farmers' picnic as the picnic lunch itself.

To help people find themselves and their true expression in a community is the great idea back of The Little Country Theatre. It will serve as a sociological experiment station. Every day its vision grows bigger. In years to come, if the idea is thoroughly carried out, there will be more contented farm communities in the state of North Dakota because the people will have found their true expression in the community. As a dynamic force in spreading the gospel of social recreation among people who reside in this and other states, its worth can never be computed. The social life which will eventually be built up around the community will be one characteristic of the inhabitants of that community. The soil must have a soul.<sup>125</sup>

In 1908, Arvold went to North Dakota Agricultural College as an instructor in public speaking. His answer to a country school teacher's request for a few copies of plays was, inadvertently, the foundation of his Little Country Theatre project, for other requests followed, and to satisfy them a packet library service was established. Public speaking became dramatics for Arvold, and in a few years the old chapel began its metamorphosis into the Little Country Theatre. The work now being done is the result of twenty-five years of growth and development, and Judge Chris-

<sup>125</sup> Arvold, A. G., *The Soul and the Soil*, pamphlet published by the National Recreation Association, New York, 1916.

tianson, of the Supreme Court of North Dakota, made the following statement of its importance: "The Little Country Theatre movement is more important to the welfare of North Dakota than all the laws which will be passed by legislators in the next twenty years"<sup>16</sup>

In 1922 the State Fair Board turned over to Arvold an old dairy building and grounds which he converted into a community building and playground. The grounds are large enough for the athletics, picnics and other celebrations of the average community and, although the stage is smaller than the one in the Little Country Theatre, the building and the grounds serve the same purpose as the one on the campus, and afford a place in which people of the country communities can present their home-talent programs

The program and work of the Little Country Theatre has many phases. First of all, there is the theatre itself, which is a laboratory as well as a place for the presentation of dramatic performances. Attached to it is "The Lincoln Log Cabin" which is used both as a reception room, a library and a laboratory. The theatre library constitutes the second phase of the work. The library, housed in various places on the campus, includes not only hundreds of technical books and plays, but also source books for research in folk drama and, in addition, about 400 pictures of the various buildings in the state which are used for community gatherings. There is also a package library system whereby country communities can obtain materials for programs, and copies of plays and pageants are loaned to people throughout the state who wish to read them.

The greatest project is the assistance given to rural communities in developing and presenting plays—in his rôle of advisor, Arvold has answered more than 19,000 letters. New community halls are being built in various places, and many schools, churches and even barns are being made over and adapted for use as theatres; pageantry is developing on a fairly large scale, and over 35 country play days are now celebrated in the state each year.

**The Carolina Playmakers.**—Just as Arvold's genius was responsible for the Little Country Theatre in North Dakota, so that of Frederick H. Koch is responsible for the Carolina Playmakers of North Carolina; incidentally, he also began his teaching career in North Dakota. In 1905, three years before Arvold began his

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<sup>16</sup> Arvold, A. G., *The Little Country Theatre*.

work at North Dakota Agricultural College, Koch went to the University of North Dakota as an instructor in English. During his first year there, he began to develop drama on the campus, the following year he made his first tour of the state with the cast which had appeared in connection with the university's commencement program, and he continued these tours year after year. In 1910, "The Sock and Buskin Society" was organized and began to develop and present folk drama, plays characterized by Koch as "simple plays, sometimes crude, but always near to the good, strong, wind-swept soil."<sup>17</sup> In 1917 the name of the Society was changed to "The Dakota Players." The Carolina Playmakers and their presentations are Koch's continuation, in North Carolina, of the work he began in North Dakota more than twenty-five years ago.

According to Bartlett Clark, North Carolina had been removed from the mailing list of one prominent publisher of plays before the organization of the Carolina Playmakers in 1918,<sup>18</sup> for the state showed so little interest in drama that publishers considered it dead territory. But since the organization of this group, interest in the theatre has steadily increased. The Playmakers have appeared in all the large cities in the state and in hundreds of rural communities, the bus they own enabling them to reach every section. Former members of the Playmakers are continuing the work, teaching and coaching in other states as well as North Carolina. The Bureau of Community Drama, a part of the university's extension service, conducts an annual Dramatic Festival and State-wide Tournament, and *The Carolina Play-Book*, a periodical devoted to the theatre, is also published. Koch is now personally advising the state lecturer of the Grange, which again became active in the state in 1930.

The Carolina Playmakers in 1918 used an improvised stage in the Chapel Hill High School for their performances; they now have a beautiful and unique building of their own on the campus and, in addition, a Forest Theatre for outdoor performances.

Because of their development and presentation of the folk drama, the Carolina Playmakers have made a nation-wide reputation for themselves and their art, they have appeared in South Carolina, Georgia, Alabama, Virginia, Tennessee, Maryland, the

<sup>17</sup> Koch, Frederick H., *op. cit.*, p. 6.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 6.

District of Columbia, Pennsylvania, New Jersey and Connecticut, and have even reached the heights of Broadway. Paul Green, a former member, received the Pulitzer Prize in 1927 for *In Abraham's Bosom*, his epic tragedy of the Negro.

Koch gives the following description of the Carolina folk plays:

Our Carolina Folk-Plays are plays of common experience and common interest, ranging in scene from the Great Smoky mountains on the western border to the shifting shoals of Cape Hatteras. Some of the titles will suggest the variety of the materials from which the plays are drawn. *A Shotgun Splin'*, a comedy of mountain wedlock; *Old Wash Lucas*, a farm tragedy of the stingiest man in Harnett County; *Off Nags Head*, the haunting tragedy of the lost daughter of Aaron Burr, *Lighted Candles*, a tragedy of the Carolina highlands, *In Dixon's Kitchen*, the interrupted courtship of a sun-tanned country boy, *Dod Gast Ye Both*, the robustious comedy of a mountain moonshiner, *Blackbeard*, pirate of the Carolina coast; *The Scuffletown Outlaws*, of the Croatan Indians of southeastern Carolina, *Gaius and Gaius, Jr*, a comedy of the old plantation days, *Job's Kinfolks*, from the lives of three generations of mill people in Winston-Salem; *Trista*, a wistful fantasy of fisher folk of the little town of Beaufort.<sup>19</sup>

Better known than any of those listed is *Fixin's*, one of Paul Green's earlier plays written while he was in college. It deals with the hard and poverty-stricken existence of the tenant farmer with a realism found nowhere else, as far as the author knows, except in Mary Roberts' rural novel, *Time of Man*, and in another play, *Peggy*, written by Harold Williamson of the Carolina Playmakers.

In 1919, the editor of the *American Review of Reviews* commented on the work of Koch and his Carolina Playmakers as follows: "When every community has its own native group of plays and producers we shall have a national American theatre that will give a richly varied, authentic expression of American life. We shall be aware—which we are only dimly at the present—of the pulse of the people by the expression in folk-plays of their coordinated minds. It is this common vision, this collective striving that determines nationalism, and remains throughout the ages, the one and only touchstone of the future."<sup>20</sup> And he might have added that rural life is the major source of these folk plays.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid*, p. 7

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 9-10; quoted from *The American Review of Reviews*, September, 1919

**Rural Drama and Music in Wisconsin.**—It is doubtful whether any agency has done more for rural art than the results which have been achieved by the combined extension work of the Departments of Sociology and Speech of the University of Wisconsin, for Miss Ethel T. Rockwell, of the Department of Speech, and Professor A. F. Wileden, of the Department of Sociology, together have developed drama and music in the rural areas of Wisconsin on something approaching mass scale.

Two of the eight "immediate goals" of rural sociology in Wisconsin named by Wileden are of significance in the development of rural art: "Providing an adequate recreation program in an attempt to encourage a wise use of leisure time," and "The development of a socialized personality through opportunity for self-expression, and of higher cultural standards and ideals in home and country through encouragement of the rural arts"<sup>21</sup>

The University Extension Division has a library of several thousand plays and books on dramatic technique which it circulates to both rural and urban groups, and it lends native plays and pageants to those requesting them. It has organized a Dramatic Guild composed of dramatic clubs and Little Theatres. It also conducts an annual Dramatic and Speech Institute, offers other lectures, gives assistance in dramatics for county fairs, advises on costumes, stage settings and draperies, rents stage curtains, and cooperates with summer camps and playgrounds and with the agricultural extension service in its dramatic work in rural communities<sup>22</sup>

The work in rural dramatics for 1930 culminated in three state-wide events: (1) a rural Adult Drama Tournament ending during Farm and Home Week in February, (2) an original play-writing contest for rural people held in March as a part of the Drama Guild Festival, and (3) a rural Junior Drama Tournament ending in June during 4-H Leaders' Week. According to Wileden, "With the exception of the play-writing contest, these state-wide events are all climaxes of county-wide events in which from three to forty local groups take part." Twelve counties were represented

<sup>21</sup> Wileden, A. F., *Rural Sociology Extension in Wisconsin*, Department of Rural Sociology, College of Agriculture, University of Wisconsin, Madison, March, 1931, p. 6

<sup>22</sup> See Bulletin of the University of Wisconsin, "Dramatic Activities, Services Offered by The Bureau of Dramatic Activities," Ethel Theodora Rockwell, Chief, Madison, August, 1930



in the Adult Drama Tournament, 107 rural people took part, and 2112 people attended the dramatic performance during Farm and Home Week in 1930.<sup>23</sup>

The first state-wide music event in Wisconsin was held during Farm and Home Week in February, 1931. "It was composed of choral groups consisting of from twenty-five to sixty-three individuals chosen from within the participating counties in practically any way they saw fit, provided they conformed to certain minimum state rules. Those who came to the state festival represented at least two thousand participants back in their own counties. Each participating group presented a half-hour musical program as a part of which the selection 'Largo' by Handel was required"<sup>24</sup> Two hundred and nine rural people participated in this festival, and it was attended by 1500 people

The writer heard the semi-finals in the Dramatic Tournament and most of the rural choral group, and was frankly surprised at the excellence of both types of performance. Good technique and interpretation were shown in singing the "Largo," and the acting of some of the farm people in the plays was equal to that of more than one actor and actress he has seen on Broadway

The following figures from Wileden's bulletin indicate the scope and results of the activities in Wisconsin in these two forms of rural art.

#### FIGURES SHOWING EXTENT OF THE PROGRAM\*

*Rural Dramatics* (figures for preceding 12 months, 1930-31, unless otherwise indicated)

Number of years rural dramatics has been promoted in the state	5
Number of counties with county-wide drama program (1926-27)	2
" " " " " " " " " (1927-28)	6
" " " " " " " " " (1928-29)	17
" " " " " " " " " (1929-30)	19
" " " " " " " " " (1930-31)	31
Number of counties with a drama program for adults	20
Number of counties with a drama program for juniors	15
Estimated number of rural groups putting on plays	350
Estimated number of rural people taking part in plays	3000
Number of key persons in Wisconsin supplied with the Drama-Music Bulletin (4 copies a year)	1500
Number of counties competing in state adult drama tournament (February, 1931)	12

\* Wileden, A. F., *op. cit.*, p. 8.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 9.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 25-27.

Number of rural people taking part in state finals at Madison, Farm and Home Week (February, 1931)	107
Total attendance at these state drama tournament finals during Farm and Home Week (February, 1931)	2112
Number of counties competing in state junior drama tournament (June, 1930)	12
Number taking part in state junior final events held during Junior Week (June, 1930)	91
Number of plays entered in rural original play-writing contest (March, 1931)	10
Some outstanding plays written by Wisconsin rural people in the past four years are: <sup>28</sup>	
<i>Goose Money</i> —Mrs. Carl Felton	
<i>Seeing Things Right</i> —Mrs. Carl Felton	
<i>King Row</i> —H. E. Mansfield	
<i>This Way Out</i> —Mrs. Carl Felton	
<i>Vendue</i> —H. E. Mansfield	

Number of counties provided with drama leadership training institutes	12
Estimated number of rural drama leaders trained at these drama institutes	400

*Rural Music* (all figures for preceding 12 months, 1930-1931)

Number of years rural music has been promoted by the Department	2
Number of counties with county-wide music programs	10
Estimated number of rural people taking part in these music activities	5000
Number of Wisconsin key people receiving Drama-Music Bulletin (4 copies during year)	1500
Number of counties taking part in the first State Music Festival at Madison (Farm and Home Week, February, 1931)	5
Number of rural people taking part in this state music festival at Madison (February, 1931)	209
Total attendance at these state music festival events (February, 1931)	1500
Some songs presented at the state festival	
"Large" by Handel (required of all)	
"Anvil Chorus" by Verdi	
"The Heavens Resound" by Beethoven	
"Soldiers Chorus" by Gounod	
"Cradle Song" by Brahms	
"Gloria from the Twelfth Mass" by Mozart	
Number of rural music leadership training institutes provided	3
Estimated number of rural music leaders trained at these institutes	300
Number of rural music training radio broadcasts provided	2

## ART IN RELATION TO LEISURE AND RECREATION

**The Place of Leisure in Farm Life.**—For countless generations work as a whole was monotonous, irksome and painful—

<sup>28</sup> Some of these plays have been presented by the same cast a dozen times and witnessed by 5000 people, an audience of a thousand people or over at one of these contests is not at all uncommon.

"Of these plays, *Goose Money* has been published as a special circular by the Wisconsin College of Agriculture Mrs. Felton has had her second play, *Seeing Things Right*, printed and distributed. The others have not yet been published."

done truly "in the sweat of the face." Men were beasts of burden, "hewers of wood and drawers of water" for many years before they became inventors, money makers or artists. Because of the great amount of work to be done, arduous labor was formerly a cardinal virtue, and idleness or leisure a besetting sin, and because farming requires a great deal of manual labor, many farm people, still convinced that hard work is the way to heaven, have a complex against amusement, play, recreation and, in some cases, even against worth-while reading.

In contrast to these attitudes has been the theory, current since the time of Aristotle, that culture develops out of leisure. This, however, is not strictly true, for there are two great extremes today—excessive hard labor for some, and enforced idleness for others; this enforced idleness does not develop culture, and it is doubtful whether it is developed by the voluntary idleness of the very wealthy. Culture arises not out of leisure alone, but out of that combination of work and leisure which is most conducive to creative thinking and living.

The writer is convinced that the time is gradually approaching when farm people will see that leisure is essential to the development of both culture and personality. When enough people accept this, a vigorous protest will be raised against the tacitly accepted urban monopoly of opportunity for leisure. Specializing in leisure will no longer be a mark of prestige and distinction for a few people in the city, leisure will be claimed as part of the rightful heritage for farmers as it now is for city working people. The rural population will no longer be thought of as dumb animals whose sole justification for existence is the raw food, clothing and shelter supplies they produce for themselves and the world—a theory which, far from solving farm problems, has instead created them. And if that day ever comes, a part of its program will be to teach the need, and an appreciation of the value, of a constructive use of the time not spent in work.

**Leisure not Idleness.**—The concept of leisure is vastly different from that of mere idleness, with the latter's implication of laziness, uselessness, and physical, mental and moral disintegration. Because there has never been—and is not now—any place on a farm for people with these traits and tendencies, rural people loathe idleness, and because the idlers have been "hoboes" or worthless spendthrifts, the farmer teaches his sons and daughters

to work, even at the neglect of learning to play. But idleness is not the only alternative to work, for leisure is not idleness.

The concept of leisure connotes a knowledge and love of zestful and worth-while things and activities gained, partly at least, through a surcease from work. Its first requisite is always a release from the deadly monotony of hard work, either through lessening the irksomeness and increasing the pride and zest in the work, or through periods of time away from it. In a study he made in Michigan, Mumford found that an increased income increased the amount of leisure time.<sup>27</sup> Since income is increased by the application of science, business and wise planning, these in turn increase leisure; therefore, power machinery, efficient management, business farming—in short, scientific and creative planning and thinking of any kind—may legitimately be said to create leisure. Leisure often consists only of doing something different from the usual routine, and the seed of the most constructive leisure is often an avocation or a hobby—music, inventing, collecting stamps or butterflies, painting, or even reading detective stories.

In every case, the constructive use of leisure time demands materials, ideas or ideals, and time, for leisure becomes idleness without ideas and facilities for action. In many ways, rural life has greater potentialities and possibilities than urban life for the development of constructive leisure. Living and working with living growing things gives the farmer an advantage over the man who is dominated by inanimate things and the routine and relentless pressure of machine processes. If the farmer knows how, he can live a zestful and creative life, for his relative independence and security, and the fact that he is his own boss, have given him a habit of thought and a personality which make it easy for him to become an inventor or an artist.

**Handicaps to Leisure-time Activities on the Farm.**—Rural life is not yet ideal, for it has not fully learned how to develop and use leisure. This can be achieved, first, by eliminating the handicaps which are all too prevalent in farm life—long and unstandardized working hours, the lack of places and facilities for play and recreation, the widespread conviction that play and amuse-

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<sup>27</sup> Mumford, E., "Relation of Different Degrees of Economic Success of Individual Farmers to their Standard of Life," in Sanderson, Dwight, *et al*, *op cit*, pp. 135-141.

ment are wicked; the lack of power machinery, particularly in the home; and the absence of libraries and museums, of home and community games, and, sometimes, even home reading matter. In the second place, the development of the time, the facilities and an appreciation of leisure is necessary. Play, recreation, sport, amusement, rest, and the creation and appreciation of art and beauty are all part of constructive leisure. In the third place, cities consider recreation and the constructive use of leisure of sufficient importance to warrant the expenditure of public funds, both tax and endowment; and country districts must eventually do likewise. In the fourth place, leisure activities sometimes outrank one's vocation in supplying a zest and purpose to life. This is not abnormal, but Mark Twain's philosophy is even better: "I have not done a day's work in my life; what I have done, I have done because it has been play." Last of all, the use of leisure is a part of the activity and art of living. In order to learn to live fully, one must learn to work, learn to convert his work into dividends, and finally learn to convert both his work and its dividends into a satisfying, worth-while life, and in order to accomplish this, the art of a satisfying and creative use of leisure is necessary, in addition to work and a knowledge of the science of business.<sup>28</sup>

### QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

- 1 Why are the rural people in this country less interested in art than are those of many other countries?
- 2 Do you consider an appreciation of art and a desire for art a part of the standard of living?
- 3 What factors in rural life lead to an appreciation of artistic things, and what tend to stifle this appreciation?
- 4 Why has no great folk art ever been developed by the rural people of America?
- 5 List everything you can think of which furnishes a basis for the development of art in rural life
- 6 Discuss the relationship between leisure and art

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*PART THREE*

THE AMERICAN FARMER AND HIS SOCIETY





## CHAPTER XXIII

### THE FARMER AND HIS COMMUNITY

#### THE PLACE OF THE COMMUNITY IN SOCIETY

**The Universality of the Community.**—Man has always been a community animal. In primitive society his community included only his blood kinsmen or his relatives, for, with no means of transportation and communication, with little knowledge of converting raw materials into finished goods, and with little or no exchange of goods between geographical areas, only a small group could be sustained within a given geographical area. Although the groups roamed over wide areas, they lived in consolidated communities for protection, for the advantages arising from a division of labor within the group, and for social intercourse. As methods of production were developed and trade and commerce increased, these groups became larger and, in some respects, more independent as far as work was concerned, although the individual members became more interdependent.

A division of labor between institutions and services is now the basis of economic and social organization throughout the world, and therefore a community must be large enough to provide a complete set of institutions and services if it is to be as self-sufficient as the old kinship group. Education, religion, government, industry, markets, and even recreation are now institutionalized outside the home, and because of this development, which constitutes a great gain in social efficiency, everyone must of necessity be a member of a definite community in order to have the benefit of the work performed by its institutions. Life is a unity with a definite set of needs. Since no one institution can supply all of them, there must be some unit which will provide all these necessities—food, clothing, shelter, health, education, religion, recreation, and social contacts—and this unit is the community.

The community is the first social group in modern life to ap-

proach self-sufficiency. Neither individuals nor institutions are ever self-sufficient, nor is a community, in the sense that it could build a wall around itself without feeling its isolation from the rest of the world. By community self-sufficiency is meant that the community has all the major social institutions—homes, churches, industries, schools, and government—as part of its social machinery, and that the people, interests and occupations within it are sufficiently diversified to supply all the types of human services and relations necessary to make everyday life a going concern. In other words, every need and want in life must be supplied by the community to its people through some agency that is a part of its social machinery.

Community life necessitates organized team work to supply the needs and desires of all its members. As each player's work on a football team differs from that of every other player, but their combined activities constitute team play, so there are many divisions of labor in community life, but combined they sustain life and supply its many needs. The elements of a community are its people, the geographic area in which they live, the agencies which serve their needs, and their common purposes in life. The factors which weld them into a common community life are their customs, opinions, organizations, institutions, and laws.

People in a local community depend upon one another to the same degree that they do in a larger society—to an even greater degree in some ways, for if there is an epidemic, poor sanitation, an immoral element, or a common task to be done, every member of the community is more likely to recognize it and to be individually concerned than is the case when such problems confront the state or the nation. On the other hand, business and commercial relations often call for wider contacts than the local community affords, books, magazines and newspapers, and good facilities for transportation and communication make possible these extra-community contacts, and consequently those who enjoy these wider contacts often do not consider themselves a part of their local community to any great extent. But in spite of this, such people are members of the local community and dependent on all of its services, for no one can escape community life unless he reverts to an animal existence.

The local community furnishes not only the physical environ-

ment of its members, but nearly all their social environment. Their motives, habits, and ambitions are usually conditioned and measured by the standards of the local community; it is a factor in character building, and there their character is tested. The community supplies the background for their social institutions, it pours its influence into their lives and, as soon as they step outside their homes, their lives are likewise poured into it. It furnishes almost all of their physical and social contacts, and it is from these contacts that they not only achieve their attainments but also derive their ego and their personalities.

**Brief Outline of Rural Community Life in the United States.**—Until comparatively recently, rural people have been no different, in their desire for community life, from the peoples of all times. In the colonial period of our history, the settlers at first lived for the most part in compact little communities favorably situated by the sea or a river, and any extensive farming was on land that radiated outward from these central communities. The colonists had lived in similar agricultural villages before they came to this country, and they naturally followed the same scheme of social organization here.<sup>1</sup> The settlements at Plymouth, Salem, New Paltz, Quaker Hill, and dozens of the less well-known English, Dutch, and French settlements were all of this type. The town form of government of today is the direct result of the form of social organization of the early colonists in New England, the Boston and New Haven commons are likewise heritages of these early settlements.

However, this close community settlement tended to disintegrate almost at the outset of agricultural development in America. In many cases the colonists had their first chance for individual land ownership, and convenient hillsides or fertile uplands a short distance from the central settlement invited a more isolated residence. Grants by the home governments of extensive tracts of land in New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, and elsewhere led to the establishment of large estates and to the attempt, on the part of their owners, to create large manors or feudal estates such as had prevailed in Europe for several centuries. This type of settlement is exemplified by the Van Cortlandt and Van Rensselaer manors in New York, the Tinton manor in New

<sup>1</sup> See the description of English rural life in chap. iii.

Jersey, and the Doughoregan manor of the Carrolls in Maryland.<sup>2</sup> The settlement of the so-called "colonial frontier" or Old West—the back country of New England, the Mohawk Valley, the Great Valley of Pennsylvania, the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia, and the entire Piedmont Plateau east of the Alleghanies—accelerated the rapid breaking down of these compact settlements, a process which reached completion with the settlement of the New West, the great agricultural section of today.<sup>3</sup>

People poured into these great new fertile areas from all parts of Europe and from the earlier settled sections of this country. Land was plentiful and rich, and the population was sparse and, for the most part, poor. The desire for individual ownership made these land-hungry people willing to forego the universal and age-long tendency to settle in close communities, and the result was the establishment, on a large scale and for the first time in history, of isolated farm homes. As late as 1900, the population density for the entire State of Iowa was only 40 people per square mile. In the section in that state where the writer's father, in 1874, settled on an isolated tract of prairie land with no other house in sight, there were by 1900 two families who had emigrated from England to Iowa, another from Germany, one from New York, one from Missouri, two from eastern Iowa, one of which had come from Indiana and the other from Pennsylvania. This cosmopolitan population, living on an average of at least one-half mile from one another, each operating an almost self-sufficient farm, gives an idea of the change from the compact community life of the early colonies.

The settlers of the New West formed rural neighborhoods; at first strangers to each other, they later became neighbors, and hundreds of thousands of these friendly neighborhoods arose with the westward expansion of our population. They lasted for about a century and a half, and, in many relatively isolated rural sections, there are some still in existence, but these are rapidly disintegrating under the influence of commercialized agriculture and the

<sup>2</sup> Elting, I, "Dutch Village Communities on the Hudson River," *Johns Hopkins University Studies in Historical and Political Science*, vol. 14, Adams, H. B., "Common Fields in Salem," *ibid.*, and McLearn, A. B., "Early New England Towns," *Columbia University Studies in Economic History and Public Law*, vol. XXIX, no. 1, 1908.

<sup>3</sup> Andrews, C. M., *Colonial Folkways*, in *The Chronicles of America Series*, Yale University Press, New Haven, 1919, vol. 12, chap. 11.

wider contacts made possible by the advent of the automobile and hard-surfaced roads

The problem facing the American farm family at present is that of creating a community life which is based on these extended facilities for transportation and communication and which, at the same time, preserves some of the amenities of the old friendly neighborhoods. The privations suffered by the pioneers for the sake of individual land ownership are no longer necessary, much less desirable, and the day of the self-sufficient farm has passed with the advent of the market and the exhaustion of soil fertility. Some type of community life must be evolved which will give those still living on these isolated farmsteads the opportunities and conveniences of modern life.

The community idea and the community movement have made great progress during the last twenty years.<sup>4</sup> The extent to which the rural free delivery, the telephone, the automobile and better roads have created both contacts and a desire for wider contacts among rural people has already been discussed. Modern facilities and culture standards are now almost universally known, and farm people are naturally seeking the means and methods of enjoying them. Their experiences during the World War showed them the efficiency of group and community cooperation, and started processes which will not cease working until a higher degree of community life and action is attained. Almost all of the agencies thus far discussed which are now active in the improvement of rural life are working to some extent on a community basis—farm and home demonstration work, farmers' marketing associations, recreation and uplift agencies like the Boy Scouts, the Y M C A, etc., and even schools and churches. The community movement, represented in city life by the public ownership of public utilities, consumers' cooperative stores, settlement houses and community centers, and church and community forums, has reached the rural districts;<sup>5</sup> furthermore, national, state, county, and volunteer groups are talking, promoting and organizing community projects and agencies in rural sections throughout the

<sup>4</sup> Probably the most outstanding book yet to appear on rural community development has recently come from the press. Sanderson, D., *The Rural Community*, Ginn and Company, New York, 1932. Chaps. 1, ii, and xii-xvii are especially valuable in this connection.

<sup>5</sup> Lindeman, E. C., *op cit.*, chap. vi.

country. The certain result of such activities is that all the benefits resulting from community life will be gained for rural people.

### COMMUNITY PROCESSES

**Group Processes in General.**—Although group processes in rural life in no way compare with those in city life, this does not imply that there are no fundamental group processes in rural life. Cooley's statement that society and the individual are but two aspects of the same thing—human life<sup>6</sup>—has about the same meaning as that of Joseph K. Hart, "We live and move and have our actual being, whether we will or not, in the images of social contacts and relationships with our fellows."<sup>7</sup> Although these "images" have been less pronounced and less multiple in American rural communities than elsewhere, they have never been completely absent even in the pioneer era of rural life.

Because pioneer life develops individualism, independence, and a belief in self-sufficiency, it has been assumed that group processes do not prevail to any great extent among rural people. This, however, is not the case, for the rural family of today is a much closer group than the urban family, and pioneer family life was even closer. Moreover, pioneer days and the period immediately afterward developed a neighborhood life unique in its closeness. This is one side of the picture. The other side shows an absence in rural life of many group processes that have become general in other sections of our population—committees, conferences, public discussions, compulsory political cooperation, organized play, and a complex institutional life. It is because of the absence of so many of these group processes that the greater number of rural leaders are almost totally ignorant of the dynamics and the standards developed by these processes. The "collective idea," as Miss Follett calls it, is little used by rural leaders, and its value is comparatively little known by rural people.<sup>8</sup> This so-called "collective idea" is only a term used to convey some understanding of the group process. Since this process is something which the rural people of America seem to be trying to develop, and since the various forms these efforts are taking is the subject of the fol-

<sup>6</sup> Cooley, C. H., *op cit.*, chap. i.

<sup>7</sup> Hart, Joseph K., *Community Organisation*, The Macmillan Company, New York, 1920, p. 3.

<sup>8</sup> Follett, M. P., *op cit.*, chaps. ii-v.

lowing chapter, we shall quote Miss Follett's description of the way in which the "collective idea" is derived

Let us imagine that you, I, A, B and C are in conference. Now what from our observation of groups will take place? Will you say something, and then I add a little something, and then A, and B, and C, until we have together built up, brick-wise, an idea, constructed some plan of action? Never. A has one idea, B another, C's idea is something different from either, and so on, but we cannot add all these ideas to find the group idea. They will not add any more than apples and chairs will add. But we gradually find that our problem can be solved, not indeed by mechanical aggregation, but by the subtle process of the intermingling of all the different ideas of the group. A says something. Thereupon a thought arises in B's mind. Is it B's idea or A's? Neither. It is a mingling of the two. We find that A's idea, after having been presented to B and returned to A, has become slightly, or largely, different from what it was originally. In like manner it is affected by C, and so on. But in the same way B's idea has been affected by all the others, and not only does A's idea feel the modifying influence of each of the others, but A's ideas are affected by B's relation to all the others, and A's plus B's are affected by all the others individually and collectively, and so on and on until the common idea springs into being.

We find in the end that it is not a question of my idea being supplemented by yours, but that there has been evolved a composite idea. But by the time we have reached this point we have become tremendously civilized people, for we have learned one of the most important lessons of life: we have learned to do that most wonderful thing, to say "I" representing a whole instead of "I" representing one of our separate selves. The course of action decided upon is what we all together want, and I see that it is better than what I had wanted alone. It is what I now want. . . .

I have described briefly the group process. Let us consider what is required of the individual in order that the group idea shall be produced. First and foremost, each is to do his part. But just here we have to get rid of some rather antiquated notions. The individual is not to facilitate agreement by courteously waiving his own point of view. That is just a way of shirking. Nor may I say, "Others are able to plan this better than I." Such an attitude is the result either of laziness or of a misconception. There are probably many present at the conference who could make wiser plans than I alone, but that is not the point, we have come together each to give something. I must not subordinate myself, I must affirm myself and give my full positive value to that meeting. . . .



What, then, is the essence of the group process by which are evolved the collective thought and the collective will? It is an acting and reacting, a single and identical process which brings out differences and integrates them into a unity. The complex reciprocal action, the intricate interweavings of the members of the group, is the social process.<sup>9</sup>

In no sense are rural people incapable of collective thought and action; it is the individualism of their enterprise and the isolation of their life that have deprived them of the contacts from which group processes develop.

**A Community a Functional Group.**—The rural community is a specific type of social group. It is not our purpose, however, to discuss in detail the various types of social groups, but to present only enough to differentiate between the community and other types of groups. Social groups can be classified in many ways—from the family, for example, to the entire human race. Cooley was probably the first to reduce these groups to simple and generic types in his classification into two broad types, primary and secondary groups. Primary groups are “those characterized by intimate face-to-face association and cooperation,” and secondary groups include every other form.<sup>10</sup> Bernard, in speaking of “primary” and “derivative” groups, makes practically the same classification.<sup>11</sup> Primary groups are exemplified by the family, the playground and the neighborhood; and secondary or derivative groups, by governments, national associations, political parties, religious denominations, and the like.

The old pioneer neighborhood was largely a primary group; the modern rural community, centering around a great consolidated school, for instance, or even a small town, is tending to be largely derivative because it finds that in this way the processes and agencies required for an enlarged rural social life can best be carried on and supported. But notwithstanding this fact, primary groups are relatively more influential in rural than in urban life, if for no other reason than because rural people as a whole do not participate so frequently in derivative associations. This primary group life makes the rural community a fairly intimate group, even though in some respects it may be considered derivative.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 24, 25, 26, 33

<sup>10</sup> Cooley, C. H., *op. cit.*, chap. iii

<sup>11</sup> Bernard, L. L., *An Introduction to Social Psychology*, chap. xxvi

According to Cooley, "Life in primary groups gives rise to social ideals"—love, freedom, justice, loyalty, sympathy, and the like, and if these ideals are tested by family life, the truth of this statement will be apparent. If these sentiments are then contrasted with those which prevail in derivative or secondary relationships, such as in political and professional groups, the significance of community life will readily be seen.

We may well be hesitant in defining the rural community, for it may be one thing in one instance, and an entirely different thing in another. Apparently it has at least three aspects—geographical, institutional or social, and psychological. Sanderson gives the following fairly acceptable definition and characterization of the rural community: "A rural community consists of the people in a local area tributary to the center of their common interests. The community is the smallest geographical unit of organized association of the chief human activities. The community, however, is not an area, nor an aggregation or association, but rather a corporate state of mind of those living in a local area."<sup>12</sup>

But even this definition is too restricted, for a community often operates as a social group to perform definite functions, without anything so formal as a "corporate state of mind" being present. As Steiner says, "In every community there are agencies and institutions, such as the home, church, school, civic organizations, social agencies, clubs and associations of various kinds which are frequently working at cross purposes with one another. Instead of an organized army working in accord with a unified plan, we have independent agencies interested primarily in their own methods of promoting the common welfare. No one agency is likely to see the community as a whole."<sup>13</sup>

It is apparent, then, that the foundation of the rural community is the coordination and accommodation of people and their interests in the performance of definite functions, and that community organization provides the machinery by which this is accomplished. Most writers will agree that, while the sentiments of primary group life and a "corporate state of mind" are ideals to

<sup>12</sup> Sanderson, D., "Some Fundamentals of Rural Community Organization," *Proceedings, Third National Country Life Conference*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1920, p. 66.

<sup>13</sup> Steiner, J. F., *Community Organization*, The Century Company, New York, 1925, p. 321.

strive for, rural leaders and rural people should have for their chief concern goals which can be more easily reached, or attained only by community action

#### THE NECESSITY OF COMMUNITY ACTION IN RURAL LIFE

**The Uniqueness of Rural Life.**—A great degree of cooperation is compulsory in cities, for the streets which are laid out must be followed, there are regular hours of work, municipal sanitary and housing laws must be obeyed, water, sewer, and lighting systems are public, not private, utilities, and the reign of law and government is universal. In the rural districts, most utilities are provided by the individual farm family, the farmer sets his own working hours, he manages his own farm and household, and seldom has to alter his individual inclinations because of outside compulsion. The result is that he rebels against what Carver calls "the tyranny of the mass." His geographical isolation, which is generations old, has led to a social and psychological isolation which makes any cooperation, except that in the family group, more or less unnatural to him, he sees clearly his own status as an individual, but he often fails to realize that he has a status and a responsibility as far as community life is concerned. In other words, the rural community is unusually democratic in the sense that everyone is considered of worth in himself, but it is highly undemocratic from the point of view of community cooperation. While it is true that the farmer now takes a greater part in his community's institutional life, he does this chiefly because each institution satisfies a special need of his own or his family. Refusing to be "uplifted" himself, he refuses to a considerable degree to help in "uplift" projects for others. There is nothing so indicative of the attitude of rural people as the stigma they attach to an unsuccessful individual or family, an attitude which is sometimes carried to the point of neglecting such people when they need help from the community.

The relatively small number of people in a rural community means fewer social contacts and habits of group action, conditions which make any group program or project difficult, in fact, some types, which are practical in the city, are absolutely impossible in the country. Rural life has offered too few opportunities for the community political action which has too often been the only corporate action on the part of the American people as a whole.

If class distinctions are present, as is so often the case in the south, for example, where tenants and Negroes are numerous, this further limits the number of people available for democratic community action. The rural community is likely to consist of different ethnic groups—people from various geographic areas and with different habits and customs—and this is sometimes a further handicap to cooperation.

If the population is scattered, there is all the more reason why each individual should be ready both to give and to receive assistance from everyone else, if people are isolated, there is an even greater need for bringing into their lives the things enjoyed by those who live in face-to-face groups, if there are various ethnic groups, they must work together, for each group is too small to work alone and still provide the necessary institutional and community facilities, if there are social classes, they must cooperate for the same reason. Although the difficulty of securing successful community action in rural districts often means the complete absence of plans for any form of improvement, it is this absence that constitutes the need for community promotion and development.

**The Growing Need for Larger Units of Cooperation.**—We have already discussed at some length the far-reaching changes which have taken place in rural economic and social life within the past century and, in some farming sections, only very recently. The growth of commercial agriculture and the market's consequent dominance in rural economy have been among the primary causes of this change, next in importance are probably the advent of steam, electrical and gasoline motor power, after this comes the absorption by the factory of former exclusively farm processes, the growth of villages, the development of public facilities such as roads, telephones, and mail routes, and, by no means least important, the rural people's natural desire for better schools, churches, recreation centers, and the other cultural facilities which, through their closer contacts with city life, they know other sections of the population are enjoying.

We have seen how the advent of the market made it necessary for the farmer to include the village in his everyday life and plans; he could no longer depend on his own farm as an entirely self-sufficient economic unit. He then began to produce for the market

what paid best, and to buy from it many things previously produced on his own farm or which he and his family had done without. The development of steam, electrical and gasoline motor power, and the automobile, good roads and the telephone widened his contacts and made possible and desirable wider units of group action. The absorption of hitherto purely farm processes by industrial plants led to his need for these plants and his desire to have some control over their operation. His desire for cultural satisfaction aroused a demand for many things which could not be supplied by the farm or even the few small institutions which had formerly served him.

The "center of common interest" in Sanderson's definition of a rural community was at one time purely a neighborhood center—a school, a church, or a crossroads store; but such small local centers can no longer satisfy the farmer's wider and more cosmopolitan interests, and consequently a wider unit of association—and an organized unit—becomes necessary. Rural community institutions, adequate at the time of their establishment, are no longer capable of serving rural needs satisfactorily, even though their contributions at that earlier time brought about great progress in rural life. The one-room rural school was as great a step forward as the best consolidated rural school of today is; the small denominational church was a great gain to a community which had previously had no church; the crossroads store provided service, the lack of which had seriously handicapped the pioneer family's life.

An institution is by its very nature a specialized service agency, for it was its ability to satisfy a definite need in a definite way which led to its institutionalization; in other words, each institution is the result of a human need, and each attempts to serve this need in its own particular way. The tragedy in this is that, when the need changes or a better way of handling it is found, the institution fails to make the necessary adjustments. In this, rural institutions are no exception. New needs have arisen, market and social contacts have become wider, and new interests and loyalties have been created; but because the old one-room school and the small denominational church are institutionalized and have established areas of association and intense loyalties, they refuse to give way readily. Now that other processes of association have

widened the old loyalties, the small inadequate institutions are tending to die out, and unless adequate institutions adapted to the wider scope of the farmer's present life are provided in their place, his loyalty to their service will die as well, and rural life will be completely deprived of the services they should give. The truth of this is apparent in the disintegration of thousands of rural churches and in the small attendance in thousands of one-room schools, which has already been discussed. The farmer's life and needs must be institutionalized on a wide enough basis to take into account his other areas of association and his more cosmopolitan interests in life.

**The Need for Community Control.**—In finding, or creating, wider areas of cooperation and institutionalization, the farmer is confronted not only with the problem of breaking down his loyalties to old areas and institutions, but also with the very real problem of creating new facilities which will both fit his needs and belong to him. During the disintegration of the old institutions he acquires the habit of either going without them or using those supplied by the nearby town. But the town is a municipality within itself, it belongs to another group, and the scope of its control does not include the surrounding rural districts, although its services often do. Since the farmer has a very deep sense of economic, and an even deeper sense of social, proprietorship, it is extremely desirable that there be a unit of service and control which he can feel is his own.

In securing new services for himself and his family, the farmer has developed a number of specialized control districts—school, road, and drainage districts, and control districts for animal diseases—for when the old school districts became inadequate, consolidated districts were formed, and when transportation was put on a wider basis, township—and even county—road districts were established. The need for a rural municipality now seems to have arisen. As Galpin says,

The genius of a municipality is its equipment of legal powers, and natural environing circumstances for efficacious home rule . . . A municipality is established by law and set going, like a machine. It is a single quite complicated machine, usually contrived to take care of a great number of very diverse projects . . . A group of people, having geographic unity, with similar interests, incorporated by legislative enactment, given privileges and powers of home rule

according to the size and needs of the group, is the best that civilization can yet offer as a local political unit.<sup>14</sup>

Galpin's proposed area for incorporation would constitute an alliance between the village and the rural community covering the following three zones: Zone one, the village proper, zone two, the rural territory immediately adjacent which uses the village for both trade and social purposes, and zone three, the more remote rural districts which have some interests and needs for service in common with the village, but which in addition have other interests and needs not shared by the village. The desirability of such a plan, and the early attempts at its achievement, will be discussed later; it is sufficient here to note that some such plan is needed by the farmer as the means for carrying on his enlarged and more cosmopolitan activities.

#### COMMUNITY DISINTEGRATION AND INTEGRATION

**Rural Community Disintegration.**—It is apparent that the greater part of rural life in this country is in a state of community disintegration, for the close community life of colonial times has long since disappeared, and rural districts are rapidly breaking up under the influence of the improvements in transportation and communication. Only here and there does there still remain either the pioneer neighborhood or the fully integrated rural community. A few Mormon villages are still operating as village communities;<sup>15</sup> the Castle Haynes community near Wilmington, North Carolina, is integrated socially fairly well; some other religious and immigrant communities still exist, and the pioneer neighborhood can still be found in a few isolated sections of the southern Appalachians. But all these old local community and neighborhood units are disintegrating, slowly but surely, under the impact of outside forces and the infiltration of new stimuli; and names which formerly designated actual neighborhoods are now only names of general geographical areas whose primary social relationships have become secondary or derivative.

<sup>14</sup> Galpin, C. J., *Rural Social Problems*, pp. 215-216.

<sup>15</sup> See Zimmerman, C. C., and Taylor, C. C., "Rural Organization," *Bulletin* 245, North Carolina Agricultural Experiment Station, Raleigh, 1922, Kolb, J. H., "Rural Primary Groups," *Research Bulletin* 51, Wisconsin Agricultural Experiment Station, Madison, 1921, Wakeley, R. E., *The Communities of Schuyler County, New York, 1927*, New York State Agricultural Experiment Station, Ithaca, 1930.

However, rural community disintegration is not due to these derivative groups alone, for old rural community alignments are giving way to new ones—the realignment of rural schools is pronounced, township functions are becoming almost extinct, and only seldom is even the rural church a community center. Former attractions, so to speak, have lost their magnetism or been shifted; and even though the work of the old agencies is still carried on, the old forms, alignments and loyalties have gradually shifted. Another cause of disintegration is the greater mobility of rural people, in the sense of both their migration to the city and the greater distances they can now travel. Finally, the recent appearance in rural sections of numerous agencies which were unknown twenty years ago has caused disintegration amounting, in some places, almost to confusion. When, in addition to the traditional institutions and the numerous town and village agencies already in existence, farm and home demonstration agents, health and welfare agents, and Boy and Girl Scouts appear, the competition for the time, attention, and support of rural people becomes so keen that old group alignments crack, break, and sometimes disappear.

It must not be assumed that rural life has completely degenerated because of these factors and tendencies. In some cases, to be sure, community life has deteriorated, but in others people are merely shedding their ingrown institutions to make room for those whose range is wider and whose service is greater.

**Rural Community Integration.**—It is clear from the foregoing that community disintegration is a part of the process of social life, for new agencies, institutions and social forms tend to crystallize about new ways of providing services. This is the case in rural life, as elsewhere, for the very interests which tend to destroy the old local forms tend at the same time to establish new forms and even new communities. Cooperative egg circles, shipping associations and creameries are new economic forms, consolidated school districts, union or federated churches, rural parks, county farm bureaus and the like are new social forms, and the village often becomes the social center of numerous hitherto small neighborhoods. Each of these things is happening here and there in the United States, but, as previously stated, a great part of our rural life is at present in a state of relative disorganization as far as the local community is concerned; and the rural com-



munity organization movement is an outgrowth of the recognition of this fact and an attempt to overcome it by finding ways, means, and methods of community integration.

### QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Describe the local community in which you live.
2. What changes have you yourself seen in rural life?
3. How does a community differ from a neighborhood?
4. What is meant by such phrases as "the collective idea," or "a corporate state of mind"?
5. List all of your own primary and derivative associations
6. Do you think that rural people will succeed in establishing larger rural communities, or will they be dominated by other purely derivative relationships?
7. Name the factors which are leading to the disintegration of a rural community with which you are well acquainted.

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## CHAPTER XXIV

### RURAL COMMUNITY ORGANIZATION AND AGENCIES

#### STAGES IN COMMUNITY ORGANIZATION

RURAL community organization begins whenever and wherever common interests and needs arise, and when the unit of association and cooperation for promoting and satisfying them is larger than the farm family. Such cooperative activities are now almost universal among rural people, although they vary widely in form and scope. Although some of them hardly rise to the plane of definite organization, they are nevertheless indicative of the growing tendency to group action and so must be considered as part of the trials, errors and successes by which the farmer is remaking and reintegrating his mode of life and work.

For many reasons it is impossible to describe and classify all the various types of rural organizations now in existence. For one thing, if the articles dealing with community projects and programs were clipped from agricultural journals and other rural life periodicals for a few years past, they would be so many and so diverse in scope as to make any attempt at classification an obvious impossibility. Consequently, in listing types of rural community organizations we shall not offer them as a classification, but only as evidence of the scope of the movement and its gradual tendency to assume an ever more definite form on the basis of wider areas and more inclusive programs. Nor do we attempt to list them in chronological order although, in the country as a whole, their sequence has been somewhat as we give them—at least, they have first appeared in rural life in the looser and narrower forms and, later, in the more institutionalized and broader forms.

**Informal and Spasmodic Meetings.**—Informal meetings have, of course, always existed in rural districts; but the new features of this form of community action are their frequency and the increasing number of people attending them because of easier and better transportation, the establishment of better places

for the meetings, and the appearance of experts in the various fields of rural life who are trying to help rural people in some way. For example, the writer witnessed not long ago a gathering of between 2000 and 3000 people at a school graduation and basket dinner in the open country, thirteen miles from the nearest town. People had traveled as far as twenty miles to attend; there was not one horse-drawn vehicle, but the automobiles probably numbered between 800 and 1000. Such a gathering would of course have been impossible before the advent of the automobile. Farm and home demonstration agents, health workers, agricultural extension experts, and other similar specialists increase the frequency of rural meetings; and many of these meetings are not periodic or prearranged by some established community organization. This tendency, which is present in rural communities throughout the country, can in a way be regarded as the first step toward community organization consciousness.

**Community Fairs and Exhibits.**—Although community fairs and exhibits are not found in every rural community in the country, they have, in one form or another, accompanied scientific farming; and they vary all the way from loosely organized affairs to well-planned agricultural exhibits whose educational, recreational and social features are carefully worked out in advance. Many fairs are formally organized, with officers, committees, and even a constitution and by-laws. However, the point to be stressed here is not their organization, but the fact that they are a natural outgrowth of a recent new element in the rural community, *i.e.*, scientific agriculture, with its definite standards of measurement and its established method of demonstration teaching.<sup>1</sup>

**Cooperative Enterprises.**—Cooperative enterprises arose among American farmers chiefly after the Civil War. The Grange, the Agricultural Wheel, the two branches of the Farmers' Alliance, and later the Farmers' Union, the Equity, and the Gleaners are, or were, national societies of farmers. Most of them were the result of the farmers' attempt to catch step with the methods of the business and commercial world into which they found their affairs were cast, most of them had plans for social organization,

<sup>1</sup> Morgan, J. S., "The Community Fair," *Farmers' Bulletin No. 870*, United States Department of Agriculture, Washington, D. C., and Jordan, S. M., "Entertainments for Farm Fairs," *Monthly Bulletin No. 3*, Missouri State Board of Agriculture, Jefferson City, 1920

regular meeting periods, and, often, well-organized community programs, and some of them—notably the Grange, the Gleaners, and the Farmers' Union—have done valuable work in providing farm communities with better facilities for meetings, in addition to their programs which entertained and enlightened.<sup>2</sup> More recently the Farm Bureau and the great farmers' cooperative marketing organizations have entered the field. The Farm Bureau attempts to include in its activities all the needs of rural communities; and several of the cooperatives, besides managing cooperative business affairs, have developed local community organizations and programs which offer education, recreation, and entertainment at the meetings.<sup>3</sup> On the whole, the community programs and projects of these organizations may be said to be by-products of their economic program, although the Grange, which from the start has been a social and fraternal organization, is an exception to this.

**Clubs.**—Clubs of various kinds have sprung up by the thousands in the rural communities. Some of these, like the Missouri Farmers' Club, the Illinois agricultural clubs of the 'sixties, and the boys' and girls' production clubs sponsored by agricultural extension workers, have had economic ends as their primary purposes. In addition to these, however, there are literary clubs, community improvement clubs, women's clubs, etc. Some of these are active only during the slack seasons, but others are permanently organized and have a regular program covering the entire year.<sup>4</sup> These clubs are probably more general in rural districts than any similar kind of organization, and they are an index to an enlivened community life and a recognition of the need for specific cooperative action on various problems.

<sup>2</sup> Wiest, E., *Agricultural Organization in the United States*, University of Kentucky, Lexington, 1923, chaps. xvi, xvii, xix, xx, xxi; and Butterfield, K. L., *Chapters in Rural Progress*, chap. x.

<sup>3</sup> Burritt, M. C., *The County Agent and the Farm Bureau*, Harcourt, Brace and Company, New York, 1922; Kile, O. M., *The Farm Bureau*, The Macmillan Company, New York, 1921; Kelly, E., *Handbook for Organizing Agricultural Communities*, Tobacco Growers' Cooperative Association, Raleigh, North Carolina, 1922; Landis, B. Y., *Several Aspects of Farmers' Cooperative Markets*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1925.

<sup>4</sup> Lantis, L. O., "Farmers' Clubs," *Extension Bulletin*, Ohio State University, Columbus, 1917-1918; Crocheron, B. H., "Agricultural Clubs in California," *Circular No. 190*, California Experiment Station, Berkeley; Hayes, A. W., "Examples of Community Enterprise in Louisiana," *Research Bulletin No. 3*, Tulane University, New Orleans.

**School and Church Community Programs.**—The old and well-established institutions of the rural districts have responded to the need for better and wider community action, and have begun to develop community programs in addition to carrying on their own specialized functions. The consolidated school, in particular, has contributed to the development of community meetings, programs, and organization; but even before this, some of the smaller schools were evolving community programs of their own. A consolidated school is in itself an index of the establishment of a wider farm community, and it is considered by many an ideal basis for a rural community center.<sup>5</sup> The advantages offered by it have already been discussed elsewhere at some length, and a careful study of its influence would probably reveal that it is giving a more definite form to the new and reintegrated rural community than any other agency.<sup>6</sup>

The rural church's attempt to formulate a community program was probably greater than that of any other rural institution before the school consolidation movement arose. Outstanding examples of such activities on the part of hundreds of rural churches have appeared in the last twenty years in agricultural journals, church papers, and national periodicals. Individual denominations, such as the Mennonites, Dunkers, Almish, and particularly the Mormons, have centered all their community life and activities about the church. Furthermore, as has already been said, federated, union and community churches are becoming more numerous. Church activities in the community vary all the way from ladies' aid societies to programs for the complete organization of the community, and these and other similar activities are likewise indexes of the community movement in rural life.<sup>7</sup>

**Federations and Community Councils.**—Federations and community councils have also begun to appear in rural communi-

<sup>5</sup> Carney, M., "Country Life and the Country School," and Crocheron, B. H., et al., "The Rural School as a Community Center," *Tenth Year Book of the National Society for the Study of Education*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1911, part ii.

<sup>6</sup> Cook, J. H., *op. cit.*, pp. 97-105.

<sup>7</sup> See Zumbrunnen, A. C., *The Community Church*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1922; Fiske, G. W., *The Challenge of the Country*, The Association Press, New York, 1919, chap. vii; Wilson, Warren H., *The Church of the Open Country*, Eaton and Mains, New York, 1911, chaps. ii, v, vii; and Hargreaves, J. R., "The Rural Community and Church Federation," *American Journal of Sociology*, September, 1914.

ties. The federation of all its social agencies has brought about the rural community's almost complete organization, for this step accomplishes the integration and coordination of all the specialized activities being carried on in it. In addition to the coordination of activities, whereby a well-rounded community program can be worked out, federation tends to eliminate duplication and over-organization, both of which are serious menaces to rural advancement. The rural community movement has become so widespread, and so many new agencies have sprung up, that there is sometimes more harm than good in their attempts to serve the rural community.

Community councils and federations bring together in a central advisory body representatives from all the various agencies. This advisory body, which sometimes exercises executive powers, allots to the individual agencies the work to be done; thus none of the activities in which the individual agencies have been engaged is overlooked. The community-council form of organization has its officers, its executive committee (the council), and its sub-committees on agriculture, business, health, education, recreation, morals, religion, and in other fields; it holds an annual mass meeting at which officers are elected, reports are read, and plans are made for the following year. This form of organization offers about as complete a plan of community organization as is possible at present, and, while its use is by no means widespread in rural communities, it is in existence in several places. It probably may be regarded as the outgrowth of all the activities and organized endeavors which have developed during the rural community movement,<sup>8</sup> and as the next logical step in rural community organization.

**Incorporated Rural Communities.**—For some time, under laws enacted by the various states, it has been possible for rural people to incorporate areas of similar community interest and concern in order to make more adequate provision for larger and

<sup>8</sup> "Rural Organization," *Proceedings, Third National Country Life Conference*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1920, and also "Reports of Committee on Country Life Organization," in other volumes of *ibid.*; McClenahan, B. A., *Organizing the Rural Community*, The Century Company, New York, 1922, chaps. v, vi; Morgan, E. L., "Mobilizing the Rural Community," *Extension Bulletin No. 23*, Massachusetts State College, Amherst, 1918; *Report of the Twentieth Anniversary of the Cooperative Education League of Virginia*, Richmond, 1924.

broader programs of community action. Wisconsin and Michigan have passed legislation whereby rural sections can establish community centers, councils, and buildings on the basis of their own needs; a great many states have made possible the formation of new and consolidated school areas by special laws, and under amendments to the school laws of Arkansas and Michigan school districts can cross county boundaries.<sup>9</sup> Only one state, however, has provided for the incorporation of rural communities to carry on, under political control, all the activities in which they may wish or need to engage. Section 6 of the North Carolina State Laws provides that:

At each meeting of the registered voters of a community, they shall have the right to adopt, amend, or repeal ordinances, provided such action is not inconsistent with the laws of North Carolina or the United States, concerning the following subjects: *the public roads of the community; the public schools of the community, regulations intended to promote public health, the police protection; the abatement of nuisances; the care of paupers, aged, or infirm persons; to encourage the coming of new settlers; the regulation of vagrancy, aids to the enforcement of state and national laws; the collection of community taxes; the establishment and support of public libraries, parks, halls, playgrounds, fairs, and other agencies of recreation, education, health, music, art, and morals.*<sup>10</sup>

But even this state incorporation law does not provide fully for the needs of the average community, for its application is restricted to a county school district not over two miles square. Not only is this area too small to encompass the broader functions of the modern rural community, but the law is too likely to be applied to school districts already in existence which may not coincide in any way with other community areas and interests. So far, six rural communities in North Carolina have incorporated, and while none has undertaken all the activities the Act permits, they have the municipal unit, a board of directors, and the autonomous legal power to do so. This Act is of far-reaching significance as a precedent, for it sets the stage for the establishment of a rural

<sup>9</sup> Douglass, H. P., "Recent Legislation Facilitating Rural Community Organization," *Proceedings, Third National Country Life Conference*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1920, pp. 117-132.

<sup>10</sup> *Public Laws of North Carolina*, 1917, chap. cxxviii (Italics mine—C. C. T.)



municipality as soon as a community has developed to the point of knowing what it wants and should have.

**Constructed Communities.**—One of the most significant movements of the present is the establishment, by the Reclamation Division of the United States Department of the Interior, of complete communities in reclamation areas, a policy in which it is following the example of California, where two such communities, planned to offer all the facilities of modern community life, have already been developed. Additional impetus to this movement can be expected from the Farm Communities Association whose purpose is similar—the construction of complete communities in new or partially settled sections. If these two agencies succeed in their efforts, we may see the future development, on a great part of our unoccupied land, of scientifically planned, complete rural communities.<sup>11</sup>

#### SOME PRINCIPLES OF RURAL COMMUNITY ORGANIZATION

**No Patent Scheme of Rural Community Organization.**—We have seen that rural community activity has increased greatly in this country during the past generation, that the organized activities of rural people are extremely diversified but, nevertheless, quite universal; that the tendency to consolidate these activities into a unified community program is growing, and that some indications of the definite recognition of the existence of, and need for, autonomous rural community municipalities are appearing. We shall now make some general statements concerning these diverse activities.

In the first place, it is apparent to all the observers of American rural life and activities that no patent scheme of community organization will apply to all rural communities. Some sections contain ethnic or religious groups with an institutional psychological autonomy not found in others; racial elements present in other sections make complete community assimilation neither feasible nor possible, the proximity of others to village and city areas is leading to their disintegration and reintegration, but there are still others as yet little affected by this proximity, some have already developed a community organization and diversified community

<sup>11</sup> Mead, E., *op cit*; Black, J. D., and Gray, L. C., "Land Settlement and Colonization in the Great Lakes States," *Department Bulletin No. 1295*, Department of Agriculture, Washington, D. C., 1925.

activities, while others are still in the pioneer stage of agriculture. Therefore certain general principles of community organization must be followed:

1. To build, coordinate and facilitate community action on the basis of the agencies and activities already present.
2. To widen the scope and activities of the existing agencies.
3. To bring leaders and representatives of all these agencies together in a council in order that duplication may be eliminated, and new activities may be encouraged by those in whom the people have confidence
4. To teach every agency working with larger units than the family the efficacy of group or community action in carrying out its projects and in rendering service to rural people
5. To insure that the residents of the community are recognized, by the directors of the overhead organization of the various agencies, as of greater importance than the smooth administrative operation or the vested interests of any national, state, or institutional organization.
6. To establish a local receiving station, as it were; a community meeting place where the members of the community can receive all the messages being broadcast for their benefit from dozens of central stations. At present the local rural community cannot take full advantage of the efforts being made to help it, chiefly because one or more agencies is trying to satisfy each of the community's specific needs without any means of transmitting its own messages.
7. To encourage participation in community action on the part of every member of the community, thereby developing leadership and self-support. Community organization must grow out of a knowledge on the part of rural people of their ability to render service to themselves, for only when everyone shares in the satisfaction of the common needs and desires can community life and action become possible

#### COMMUNITY CENTERS AND BUILDINGS

**The Community Center Idea.**—A community center may be thought of in several ways: as a building which is erected especially for the purposes of the whole community, as the building, already in existence, in which the community meets together most often; as a group of buildings organized around a geographic

center; or even as a village which supplies the greatest number of service agencies to satisfy the individual and common desires of rural people.

Regardless of which of these constitutes the community center, it should be real, tangible, and recognized by those who use it as their own, for otherwise it will be a center in name only, furthermore, it should be planned and operated as the center of community interest and service. Some Utopian schemes have been presented for community centers which require many buildings, extensive play space, and a large personnel, but facilities on so elaborate a scale as this are not possessed by even urban communities, and they would fit only into a perfectly executed scheme of community organization, such as complete communism. What rural people want, and what they tend to obtain, are centers where their major interests can be served and their common life developed. The school and church have been performing these functions ever since their establishment; the market place is performing them in one or more capacities, the public recreation places are doing it in another, and still other centers do it for still other common interests. This was clearly set forth by Galpin in his study, "The Social Anatomy of an Agricultural Community"<sup>12</sup> Similar studies which have subsequently been made in different sections of this country indicate that, as the structure of rural society has developed, different zones of service for each rural interest have also developed—trade zones, school zones, church zones, recreation zones, and the like. Even the trade zones do not always cover the same territory for, in giving adequate service, they depend upon established economic and social institutions whose efficiency of operation necessitates the support of various clienteles. Thus rural life interests are, and probably should be, served from various centers; and any attempt to change this would be not only Utopian, but futile.<sup>13</sup>

It should not be assumed, however, that, because the structure

<sup>12</sup> Galpin, C. J., "The Social Anatomy of an Agricultural Community," *Research Bulletin No. 34*, University of Wisconsin Experiment Station, Madison, 1915.

<sup>13</sup> For evidence of the great difference in population, ethnic groups, and the traditional and present structure of rural society, see the following three reports of studies in different sections of this country: Kolb, J. H., *op. cit.*; Sanderson, D., "Locating the Rural Community," New York State College of Agriculture, Ithaca; and Zimmerman, C. C., and Taylor, C. C., *op. cit.*

of rural society and the organization of its social interests have developed along certain lines, there is no possibility of providing better facilities to serve these interests or of developing centers of activities and an organization different from those of the present. Many of the old centers have disintegrated because of the changes which have occurred in rural life, and as a result many rural interests are being served inadequately. For example, the market, a characteristic of the agricultural economy of today, has brought rural people into contact with villages and towns whose institutions are either built for the sole purpose of serving the interests of the tradespeople, or commercialized, but there is still the need of centers which will definitely and adequately serve the interests of rural people.

**The School.**—There are some one-room schools which have become community or neighborhood centers. Neighborhood playgrounds have been built, bands and other community musical organizations formed, farmers' institutes held, cooperative buying clubs formed, boys' and girls' production clubs and women's clubs organized, and farm demonstration projects formulated; and neighborhood socials, entertainments and social meetings of all kinds have been held there.<sup>14</sup>

Consolidated schools very frequently develop into community centers, for they offer even better facilities than the one-room school for all kinds of projects—farmers' institutes, lectures, and other short courses, community clubs, parent-teacher associations, Sunday school conventions, community socials, school and community plays and concerts, picnics, community fairs, all kinds of farm demonstrations, cooperative association meetings, athletic meets, and almost every other form of community or neighborhood activity imaginable.<sup>15</sup>

**The Rural Church.**—In a great many cases, rural churches have also become community centers. The pastor and the congregation have used the church buildings for various kinds of social gatherings, made space available for high schools, developed recreational and athletic facilities, organized musical groups and community study courses, loaned the building for home-talent entertainments and for farmers' institutes and other agricultural

<sup>14</sup> Kimball, Alice M., "Rallying Round the School," *Country Gentleman*, January 19 and 26, 1918

<sup>15</sup> Hayes, A. W., *Rural Community Organization*, chap. vi.

club meetings, thrown the parish house open to the community, and in many other ways made the buildings available and useful in serving the needs of the whole community.<sup>16</sup>

**The Grange and the Farm Union Hall.**—In many sections of the country, Grange and Farm Union halls have served as community centers. In the first place, the programs of these and similar organizations cover the scope of community interests. But in addition to these programs, these agencies have loaned their halls for all kinds of educational, religious, entertainment, social and business meetings, which are open to all members of the community regardless of whether they belong to the organization itself.

**Community Buildings.**—During the last twenty years, community buildings have been erected fairly rapidly in various parts of the country. According to a survey made by the United States Department of Agriculture in 1921, there were 256 such buildings, most of them were in small towns, but 83 were located in the open country. They include school, church and fraternal society buildings, but a number of them are financed by donations, subscriptions, or taxes. Community buildings are often managed by a popularly elected board of governors, and manned by a special personnel who are paid for their services. It is unnecessary to list the activities and interests which center in community buildings and grounds, for such buildings afford facilities for every type of legitimate activity which the community may need or develop, and their equipment provides for all sorts of athletic, recreational, and social meetings. Children and adults find in them adequate facilities for satisfying almost all of their social desires, whether for reading, playing, or working in groups whose desires and interests are similar to their own.<sup>17</sup>

In a preface to one of the bulletins giving information on community buildings, Galpin indicates that the community building is, up to the present time, the biggest step that has been taken in organizing the rural community. He says:

<sup>16</sup> Phelan, J., *op cit*, pp 411-421, Wilson Warren H., *The Church of the Open Country*, chap 11, Morse, R., *Fear God in Your Own Village*, Henry Holt & Company, Inc., New York, 1918, chaps vi, vii, viii.

<sup>17</sup> *Bulletin No 825*, United States Department of Agriculture; Nason, W. C., "Uses of Rural Community Buildings," *Farmers' Bulletin No 1274*, United States Department of Agriculture, Washington, D. C., 1922, Galpin, C. J., *Farmers' Bulletin No 1192*, United States Department of Agriculture, 1921.

Two widely diverging and competing points of view in public matters have characterized rural life in America for generations. The family point of view has led to a struggle among leading families for family dominance, while the community point of view, tending to weld neighborhood families into an individual whole, has led to a common struggle with the forces of nature and with tradition and inertia for community control in matters that concern the common weal.

The race between these two types, which we may call the family regime and the community regime, has in the last decade gone strongly to the community type. So steady, indeed, has been the looming of the community that now, while the pure gold of family ideals bids fair to be carefully conserved, the spirit of family dominance in rural social life seems likely sooner or later to be merged into the community spirit.<sup>18</sup>

#### FORMS AND TYPES OF COMMUNITY ORGANIZATION

**Interest in Community Organization Very Recent.**—Workers in the field of rural sociology have been attempting, during the last ten years, to make a scientific approach to the problem of rural community organization. The first concrete study was Galpin's *The Social Anatomy of an Agricultural Community*, referred to in the preceding section of this chapter. This study was followed by three similar studies carried on in Wisconsin, New York, and North Carolina,<sup>19</sup> but each of them was concerned primarily with the location of rural communities rather than with the study of the forms and functions of community organization. Several books dealing with the whole problem of rural communities and their organization appeared about this time and even earlier, Wilson's *Evolution of the Country Community* having been published almost a decade before.<sup>20</sup> According to the nationwide study of rural social research made in 1927 by the National Research Council, there were at that time 23 research studies in the field of community structure or organization which were either being carried on or had been completed,<sup>21</sup> and several others have been projected since that time. Since only a brief analysis is pos-

<sup>18</sup> Galpin, C. J., *Farmers' Bulletin No. 1192*.

<sup>19</sup> Kolb, J. H., *op. cit.*, Sanderson, D., and Thompson, W. S., "The Social Areas of Otsego County," *Bulletin 422*, Cornell University, Ithaca, 1923, Zimmerman, C. C., and Taylor, C. C., *op. cit.*

<sup>20</sup> Wilson, W. H., *Evolution of the Country Community*, The Pilgrim Press, Boston, 1912.

<sup>21</sup> Galpin, C. J., Sanderson, D., Kolb, H. J., and Taylor, Carl C., "Rural Social Research in the United States," *National Social Research Monograph*, 1927.

sible here, we shall use data from only a few of these studies, and the others will be cited either in footnotes or in the bibliography at the end of this chapter.

**Tendencies in Community Organization.**—Sociologists have long known that there is a great difference between the activities about which institutions crystallize and those which are not sufficiently stable and homogeneous to make institutionalization possible. Institutions achieve their relative permanence because of the fact that they represent crystallized ways of performing fairly specific activities, and this permanence endows them with a certain sanctity. Community organizations have no such permanence or sanctity because they are neither crystallized nor formal, and for this reason they change and crumble easily. Instead of being discouraged because of this, it is far better to realize the definite value in our ability to use new forms of association to accomplish new tasks.

When special studies of communities and their organization were first undertaken, one of the first things discovered was that community organization was no longer confined to local neighborhood groups, except where strong religious or ethnic ties still held the people in what might be called cults. The second discovery was that community organization varied widely over the different geographic sections of the country. In 1921, Kolb found in Dane County, Wisconsin, that something approaching the old pioneer neighborhood alignment still existed,<sup>22</sup> but Taylor and Zimmerman, working in Wake-County, North Carolina, at the same time, found that only the names, and not the structures, of the old local neighborhood alignments remained.<sup>23</sup> Sanderson and Thompson found, in Otsego County, New York, a tendency for communities to center about towns and villages,<sup>24</sup> and almost every subsequent study has shown that communities and community organization are now operating on a geographical basis wider than the neighborhood. In New England and, until recently, in the middle west, the township was the basis for community organization and activity,<sup>25</sup> and it still is in Iowa for local units of the Farm Bureau. Local units of the Grange, the Farmers' Alliance, the Farmers'

<sup>22</sup> Kolb, J. H., "Rural Primary Groups"

<sup>23</sup> Taylor, C. C., and Zimmerman, C. C., *Economic and Social Conditions of North Carolina Farmers*

<sup>24</sup> Sanderson, D., and Thompson, W. S., *op cit*

<sup>25</sup> Morgan, E. L., "Mobilizing the Rural Community"

Union and similar large agencies were originally organized on the basis of the local neighborhood, but all of them have recently tended to use larger geographical units as the basis.

Recent studies indicate that there are apparently three points about which rural communities form, i.e., towns and villages, consolidated schools, and special interests or functions

**Two Conflicting Ideas of Community Organization.**—There has been, during recent years, a lively discussion concerning two distinct types of rural community organization—the composite, and the special interest, both of which are found in this country. At one extreme are those who hold that all the people in a rural community and, in so far as possible, all their interests should function through one composite organization, sociologists and welfare workers are the chief supporters of this type. At the other extreme are those who advocate a specialized program for each specific interest or function, supported by those who are most interested in it. This type of organization is in general favor among agricultural experts and, in particular, extension specialists. Neither need exclude the other for, in the composite type, special interests can be handled by special committees, or the special interest groups can work in the community side by side with the general organization. However, it is probably well to indicate the fundamental differences between them. Kolb and Wileden say, concerning the special interest type:

Despite this larger town-country economy, and despite the opportunity for wider selections, it is apparent from this present study that the farmer and his family are definitely seeking to maintain a sense of possession for some of their own group relations and organizations. But these are being formed around their special interests rather than upon the old neighborhood or upon a strictly locality plan. This transfer from locality groups to interest or intentional groups on the part of country people, either voluntarily or as the result of skillful promotion, is the key to an understanding of rural organization movements of the present time <sup>26</sup>

Hummel makes the following statement on the composite type:

In reality it [the community plan of work] simply suggests the division of the work of the community into what might be called

<sup>26</sup> Kolb, J. H., and Wileden, A. F., "Special Interest Groups in Rural Society." *Research Bulletin 84*, University of Wisconsin Agricultural Experiment Station, Madison, 1927, p. 3.



departments, and the selection of separate committees, composed of those who are especially capable and interested, to look after the development of each of these phases of community life. The work of these separate committees or departments is then brought together and united into one unified program through the joint action of the program and executive committees. The general community meetings offer the means of presenting and keeping this unified program before the people.

This inter-relating of the various interests has added greatly to the strength and effectiveness of the work on each separate phase of the one big problem—building a better community. The dividing of responsibility and selecting of special committees for particular phases of the community work has resulted in a more deliberate consideration of the needs of the community and the laying of carefully prepared plans for the solution of specific problems.<sup>27</sup>

It is not safe to assume that either type of organization will prevail to the exclusion of the other, or any other, form, but the many experts now working in rural districts, each of whom represents a special interest or function, and most of whom represent their directing organizations, will probably continue to mobilize only those members of the community who are actively and keenly interested in the specific project. Since these experts render valuable service to agriculture and to rural life, they and their methods will be accepted, regardless of the plan by which they work. But at the same time, general community organization will be encouraged by those who believe that recreation, sociability, etc., are of equal value to the members of the community, and this latter group will probably continue to believe also that many specialized functions will be carried out better if they are supported by a general community organization of which they are an integral part.

**Forms and Types of Composite Community Organizations.**—The farmers' club was the first type of general community organization to become widespread in the United States. No one knows how early such clubs began to appear in this country, but they were general in the middle west by the 'sixties and 'seventies of the last century. The farmers' club was the basis for the rapid success of the Grange at that time. There were also a

<sup>27</sup> Hummel, B. L., "Community Organization in Missouri," *Circular 209*, University of Missouri Agricultural Extension Service, Columbia, 1928, p. 8.

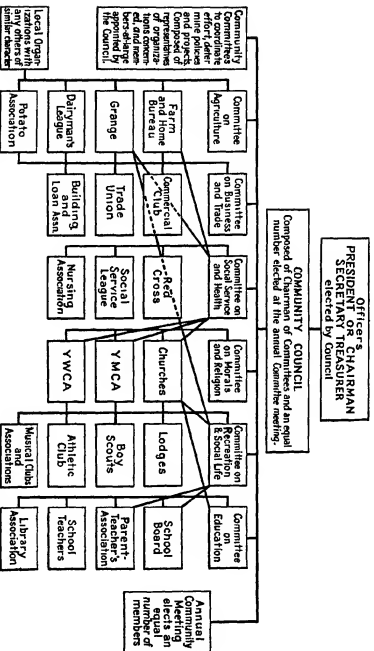


FIGURE 10.—SUGGESTED PLAN OF ORGANIZATION FOR A COMMUNITY COUNCIL.  
(From Sanderson, D., "Some Fundamentals of Rural Community Organization,"  
p 67)

great many of these clubs in the south before the Farmers' Alliance was formed, and they are now found, in various forms, everywhere throughout the country. The local units of all the great farm organizations are, or were, composite in their functions, the subordinate Granges, local Alliances, Wheels, Unions, and Arbors being examples of this type of organization.

Several types of community councils have come into existence more recently. One type includes delegates—generally officers—from all the special interest groups, in many cases from churches,

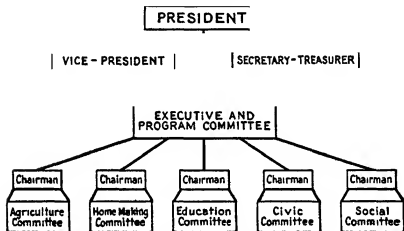


FIGURE 11.—MISSOURI STANDARD COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION  
(From Hummel, B L, *op cit*)

schools, and even the local township or municipal government. This council acts as a coordinating body to guard against duplication of effort and to provide for the proper allocation of specific work. It starts with the specialized functions of the existing organizations and works toward a coordinated, if not a composite, community program.

A second type starts its work with a survey of community needs and the existing agencies, from which it tries to build a complete community organization. Dwight Sanderson presented a plan for this type in 1921, which is shown in Figure 10.

A similar plan was worked out in Missouri by B. L. Hummel. This plan has been more widely tested than any other, except that of the township Farm Bureaus and subordinate Granges, and for

this reason it will be discussed in detail Figure 11 presents this plan of organization

Hummel lists the steps by which this type of community organization is achieved

1. Personal conference with representative community leaders
2. Small group meeting of representatives
3. First community mass meeting
4. Selection of program of work for the year
5. Developing meeting programs for the year
6. Second community-wide mass meeting

After the organization is set up, the monthly programs for the entire year are planned on the basis of projects selected by the various committees, with the addition of some entertainment and special features. At the end of the year the community holds a mass meeting in which the results of its work are surveyed and plans initiated for the work of the following year Hummel presents the following, which he calls "Some Distinguishing Features of this Plan of Organization" .

1. All phases of community life except religion are included, this may be added
2. There is no membership list Everyone over 14 years of age who is sufficiently interested to express a preference is a voting member
3. There is no membership fee and there are no dues
4. An annual program of work is selected, and this program, when worked out in detail, becomes the basis of the regular monthly meeting programs
5. It is a working organization as well as a meeting, talking, and eating organization.
6. The Missouri Standard Community Association is for all the people and is in no way limited to the membership of any organization
7. The name is such that it does not suggest either a town or a country group but includes both.
8. It puts the right person in the right place to serve best.
9. It provides a practical and effective way of checking on progress.
10. It distributes responsibility and develops leadership
11. It encourages the spirit of democracy both by the form of organization and the whole method of procedure.
12. It provides a practical means of getting all the people of a community to thinking, planning and working together.

13 It encourages the long look ahead Community progress is planned. Develops vision.

14. Meeting programs are planned a year in advance.

15 The resources of the home folks are developed to the fullest by home-talent programs.<sup>28</sup>

This form of organization may perhaps seem too formal and artificial, but it has been used in Missouri for several years. Virginia has recently adopted it, and its workability has been tested more thoroughly there, since local community leaders direct it, whereas in Missouri each phase has been under the direction of a special community organization expert But these tests will determine its feasibility as the machinery whereby the people of local rural communities can best serve their own needs

#### COMMUNITY PROCESSES

**Community Consciousness.**—Although community consciousness is usually only a vague concept, nevertheless it does exist. It consists partly of an awareness, in people's day-by-day thinking, of functional relationships. For example, a given group is interested in problems and processes which are of immediate concern to all of them—it may be building a school, controlling an epidemic, growing a certain variety of crop, or organizing a threshing ring, a cooperative creamery, a local Grange, a Farm Bureau or Farmers' Union meeting. On the other hand, the bond may be nothing more than the accident of residence, or some peculiar topography or road lay-out. However, when conditions are such that a given group is considered, by themselves or outsiders, as belonging together, there exists a degree of "we feeling." This feeling was pronounced in old local neighborhoods which looked askance on strangers and were loyal and partisan to their own group, they were neighbors.

The absence of this "we feeling" is often one of the drawbacks in organizing large communities, for even where some institutions, such as a consolidated school or an economic cooperative agency, are already rendering a common service to all the people, not everyone is conscious of the existence of community relations. On the other hand, a high degree of loyalty to the community as a whole is found in many communities, including those composed

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 8

of several former local neighborhoods;<sup>20</sup> but in every case of this kind, it is found that people have been actively working together for some time on one or more common projects. Community consciousness, therefore, is not any such vague entity as the college spirit aroused in mass meetings, it is the result of team work on tasks recognized by all as worth while, and, once created, it can be mobilized for projects which would otherwise never get a hearing. Because of the absence of this consciousness, and also the lack of the necessary machinery, many worth-while projects are never seriously considered by a community although it may have been extremely enthusiastic about them when they were first discussed.

**Community Conflicts.**—The impossibility of listing here all the various kinds of conflicts which arise in community life and action is obvious, for this reason we shall mention only a few, in particular those which are definite handicaps to community organization and action. The presence within one community of two races or classes is always such a handicap; this is true to a lesser degree where there is only one race but both native-born and foreign-born. Adequate community life is always handicapped by the presence in the same community of Negroes and whites, as in the south; or orientals and whites, as on the Pacific Coast; or Mexicans and whites, as in the southwest. Similarly with classes; the tenant-cropper class of the cotton and tobacco belts, and the hired-man class of the beet, cranberry and wheat sections are seldom, if ever, integral parts of a community, and open conflicts sometimes arise between these transient laborers and the permanent residents.

Conflicts also arise when, in order to serve the larger community, it becomes necessary to sacrifice the old neighborhood institutions, such as local schools, churches, and roads. The rise of young leaders often creates conflict with established leaders, religious differences, in addition to restricting community life, sometimes even split the community itself, new forms of recreation are often opposed by older people whose customs or religious beliefs may be offended. There are conflicts between town and country, which often do not stop at town limits, and even the

<sup>20</sup> Steiner, J. F., *The American Community in Action*, Henry Holt & Company, Inc., New York, 1928, chap. xxi, Burr, W., *Community Leadership*, Prentice-Hall, Inc., New York, 1929, chap. ii.

city enters, for some country people adopt "urban attitudes" which create bitterness between themselves and those of their neighbors who still have an aversion for everything urban.

In all these conflicts, the existence of some degree of social stratification within the group is responsible. It may be ethnic, economic, religious, or political, or occasioned by former geographical boundaries; but in all such cases the agencies which are promoting education, religion, or recreation, cooperative enterprises or general community organization find that they have to consider all these variations in social status, for it is one of these factors which is often directly responsible for the absence of community organization and even community life.

**Community Technique.**—"Community technique" is a convenient term for the processes whereby community consciousness is created and community organization and activity are accomplished.

The first step in community organization is the recognition of common needs, desires, or objectives. Old local neighborhoods found this common bond in their mutual dependence, and their isolation was a factor of community solidarity. But nothing approaching complete solidarity is possible in a larger community, for there are too many diverging lines of interests. To be successful, however, community action must have one or more common objectives which appeal to the majority of the people, for most people will willingly cooperate with others on a project in which they are personally concerned. Consequently the first step involves giving service from which many will benefit.

The second step is to arrive at something approaching a consensus of opinion on the method by which the desired result can best be achieved. This agreement can be reached only by open discussion in a community meeting.

**Leadership** is the last step. From the point of view of community action, leadership is not solely a matter of personal characteristics, but of the ability to center attention and action on the objectives selected by the group. In other words, the leader becomes a group or project entrepreneur; he must represent the group, but at the same time keep the objective constantly in mind.

**The Tendency of All Community Organizations to Become Composite.**—The difference between special interest and composite groups is not as great as is generally assumed. A com-

posite group must work on various projects which are not of equal interest to all the members of the group; these projects become special, and are carried on by special interest sub-groups within the composite group. Special interest groups, on the other hand, almost always assume other additional functions—parent-teacher associations promote recreation, beautification, and other projects not primarily connected with the school; and even economic co-operatives, such as creameries, poultry associations, and livestock shipping organizations, hold annual picnics. Kolb and Wileden found that only 34.4 per cent of the special interest groups studied were "mono-functional," one or more additional functions being assumed by the other 65.6 per cent. According to them, "There seems to be a tendency for the more active clubs to have the greater number of functions"<sup>80</sup> "Social enjoyment" was the additional function most frequently assumed.<sup>81</sup> The same tendencies were shown by a recent study made in North Carolina.<sup>82</sup> General farm organizations, such as the Grange and the Farm Bureau, have long recognized the necessity of extending the range of the activities of their locals in order to keep them alive.

These final statements, although based on observations and careful studies, must not be taken too positively. However, it does seem fairly safe to conclude that something approaching a composite organization is necessary for two reasons: (1) because of the more varied services it can render, and (2) because the mobilization of the people who are to perform specialized services demands more than the intellectual consideration of the specialized projects and making blueprints for their accomplishment. Rural people crave the creative experience and social contacts made possible through community meetings, programs, and activities.

### QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Describe in detail a local rural community organization with which you are familiar.
2. Describe a rural community center—a church, school, Grange hall, or the like—which you know personally.
3. Is the interest in rural community organization increasing or waning? Give reasons for your answer.
4. Do you think "special interest groups" or "composite community organizations" are better? Why?
5. Describe a district which you consider community conscious.

<sup>80</sup> Kolb, J. H., and Wileden, A. F., *op cit*, p. 13.

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid*, p. 15.

<sup>82</sup> Study by the writer, manuscript in preparation.



6 Describe a community conflict you know of personally.

7 Give in detail your plans for organizing a rural community

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## CHAPTER XXV

### THE FARMER AND HIS TOWN

#### THE RÔLE OF THE TOWN OR VILLAGE IN RURAL LIFE

**The Town as Part of the Rural Community.**—As was seen in Chapter XXIII, the village or small town is one of the nuclei around which the new rural community tends to center; but regardless of whether this holds true for every new rural community, the fact remains that, with few exceptions, the small town is a part of rural life. The chief occupations of the townspeople were once carried on on farms or by semi-specialized rural agencies. Blacksmithing, butter making, baking, cobbling, and similar work was at one time done by the farmers themselves; merchandising was once only rural barter, and banking, insurance, law, medicine, preaching and teaching were at one time only slightly professionalized and undertaken by men who were also farmers. Furthermore, as civilization has developed more complex human relationships, many things of which the rural person was unaware—or at least not directly concerned with—fifty or a hundred years ago, became a part of rural life. Consequently the agricultural village or small town now has a dual rôle: in the first place, it acts as a middle man in merchandising operations, and, second, it is a way station between the farmer and the larger world of which he is now part.

The small rural town is the economic and often the social center of the farmer's activities, for there is no rural community today which does not have some relations with a nearby town. Between seven- and nine-tenths of the business of the average small town is created by rural needs, and the town itself usually develops only enough to enable it to serve these needs. There are numerous instances of towns which have failed to survive when they were not well located in relation to these rural needs, for a town becomes a necessity to the farmer if there are facilities for transportation to and from the rural districts, but if these facilities are

lacking, it will not survive in and of itself.<sup>1</sup> The decadence of the rural towns which sprang up before the railroads were built has been due chiefly, if not wholly, to the fact that many of them are now inland and consequently are no longer good service agencies for agriculture.<sup>2</sup> Similarly, many so-called "crossroads towns" are now declining because the automobile carries rural people through them to the larger towns and cities.

The great number of little towns in this country is proof of their value to agriculture. As H P Douglass says, "All country-men support about as many little towns as they can."<sup>3</sup> Of course they do, just as they support as many automobiles and trucks as they can purchase, and as many acres of land as they can pay for and cultivate, for all of these facilities are daily necessities to the farmer. The number of little towns depends upon two things: the prosperity of the agricultural community, and railroad facilities, the latter in the long run depending on the prosperity of the agricultural communities they serve. The little town is hardly more than a thickly settled and more specialized section of the rural community, and many of its economic enterprises—grain elevators, cooperative creameries and cheese factories, banks, and even stores—are wholly or partly owned by farmers. The little town is a necessary part of the rural community from any point of view, and in this sense it belongs to agriculture and the agriculturalist.

**Growth of Town and Country Relationships.**—In Chapter XXIII we saw that the agricultural village, so universal in early American life, gradually gave way to the isolated farm as the place where the farmers lived, and that the present tendency is toward the establishment of some community center which will provide the facilities which rural people lack because of their isolation. The increasing relationships between town and country people which result from this tendency are of greater importance than any other aspect. Although the town has always been a necessary part of rural economy, the farmer has only recently recognized this fact, furthermore, the improved means of transportation and communication have made it relatively easy for him and his family to enjoy the town's social, as well as its trade, facilities. The farmer of today goes to town ten times as often as he did two

<sup>1</sup> Vogt, P L., *op cit*, p 359

<sup>2</sup> Andrews, C M., *op cit*, chap 11

<sup>3</sup> Douglass, H P., *The Little Town*, p 28.

generations ago, and the other members of the family have increased their contacts with it even more. The pioneer farmer had to go to town occasionally, but he went alone, now the entire family goes, the younger members much oftener than the farmer himself.

The small town is now the farmer's trading and banking center, and it is becoming more and more his recreational, social and religious center. It distributes the products of many of the manufacturing, refining, and shop processes which were formerly done on the farm but are now carried on in larger towns or in the cities. It is the first step in marketing farm products, *i.e.*, assembling and shipping. The development of these and similar activities in the town and city has had two important results: (1) because of it, a larger proportion of the national population lives in urban centers, and (2) it has increased the contacts between town and country people.

#### THE AGRICULTURAL TOWN OR VILLAGE

**The Number and Distribution of Towns.**—In 1930, there were 13,433 villages, *i.e.*, incorporated places of 2500 inhabitants or less, in this country; if every place with up to 10,000 inhabitants is included, there were 15,616 incorporated villages, towns, and small cities.<sup>4</sup> Modern means of transportation have made it possible for farmers to frequent many cities of more than 10,000 population, and it is therefore probably safe to say that 15,000 of

TABLE 112.—GROWTH AND DECLINE OF VILLAGE POPULATION IN THE UNITED STATES, 1890-1930<sup>4</sup>

Year	Incorporated Places, 2500 or Less	
	Number of Places	Per Cent of National Population
1930. . . . .	13,433	7 3
1920 . . . . .	12,857	8 5
1910 . . . . .	11,832	8 9
1900 . . . . .	8,930	8 3
1890. . . . .	6,490	7 6

<sup>4</sup> *Fifteenth Census*, vol i, Population, p. 14.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 14.

these villages and small cities are primarily trade centers for agricultural communities Table 112 presents a brief summary of the 1930 census data on the number of incorporated villages and the village population in relation to the national population.

The requirements for incorporating villages vary widely throughout the United States, and consequently census data on "incorporated places" do not give a true picture of the comparative prevalence of towns in the various states. It is calculated that there were 7000 unincorporated villages in the United States in 1930, making a total of more than twenty thousand villages, the population of which is counted as rural.<sup>6</sup> By combining data from different sources of information, calculations can be made as to the geographic distribution of towns; but even then the data are precarious if an attempt is made to estimate the number of towns on the basis of density of population. However, the distribution per density of the general population is of some significance, and it varies from 0.15 villages per 100 square miles to 70 or over.

According to Douglass, "It is Iowa, Minnesota, the Dakotas, Kansas and Nebraska, and the rural counties of Illinois and Missouri, with parts of Indiana, Michigan and Wisconsin, which constitute the pre-eminent little-town area of the United States."<sup>7</sup> In Iowa, for example, in 1930, there were 713 incorporated villages with under 1000 inhabitants and, in addition, 123 towns of from 1000 to 2500 population. Brunner and Kolb show that the West North Central Division has the greatest number of villages, including both incorporated and unincorporated places.<sup>8</sup> But there are variations between states in the same geographic section, and even greater variations between those in different sections. Douglass finds: "In the South, Georgia excepted, it takes farm populations of from four thousand to eight thousand to support one little town, while in the Northern states, bordering on the Mississippi and Missouri rivers, there is a little town for every twelve hundred and fifty or twenty-five hundred country people."<sup>9</sup> He presents the following "glaring contrasts"—to use his own term—in the number of little towns in states whose rural populations are approximately equal:<sup>10</sup>

<sup>6</sup> Brunner, E. deS., and Kolb, J. H., *Rural Social Trends*, p. 84.

<sup>7</sup> Douglass, H. P., *The Little Town*, pp. 36-37.

<sup>8</sup> Brunner and Kolb, *op cit.* p. 80.

<sup>9</sup> Douglass, H. P., *The Little Town*, p. 29.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 29.

Illinois . . . . .	993	Mississippi . . . . .	325
Iowa . . . . .	811	Louisiana . . . . .	161

The 1930 figures on the little towns in these four states are:

Illinois . . . . .	937	Mississippi . . . . .	274
Iowa . . . . .	836	Louisiana . . . . .	161

Fry shows that in 1920 the ratio of those living in villages to the general rural population was high in the Middle Atlantic states, and low in the East South Central states.<sup>11</sup> In 1930 there were more small towns in the central states than in any other section of the country.

Douglass believes that the following three factors are largely responsible for the variation in the distribution of villages: rural prosperity, physiography, and habit. In discussing the first factor, he calls the little town a "rural luxury," and says that the sections with high land value, a large percentage of improved acreage, and high production value per acre have the greatest number of villages. Under physiography he lists mountains, plains and the water supply as the type of factor which influences the distribution of towns, although the physiographic factors may of course be altered by certain projects such as irrigation, mining, or manufacturing. Under habit he discusses the differences arising from the fact that people moving into similar regions come from places with different systems of settlement. For example, Ohio, Indiana, Missouri, and Kansas do not vary to any extent from the other states in that section in either physiography or rural prosperity, but there are very few small towns; and his explanation is that these four states were settled largely by people from the rural south, whereas the other states in that section were settled chiefly by people from New England. He concludes his discussion of habit with the following statement. "Nebraska and the Dakotas have nearly as many little towns relative to population as have Illinois and Iowa, though they cannot nearly so well afford them. Their people carried the town habit as they moved West. . . . The explanation of their frequency is psychological rather than economic."<sup>12</sup>

**The Size of the Village Population.**—In 1930, the total population of villages (incorporated places of 2500 people or less)

<sup>11</sup> Fry, C. Luther, *American Villagers*, Doubleday, Doran & Company, Inc., New York, 1926, pp. 36-37.

<sup>12</sup> Douglass, H. P., *op. cit.*, pp. 31-32.

was 9,183,453, or 7.5 per cent of the total national population, and if the population of unincorporated places of the same size is included, it is calculated that about 10 per cent of the total national population lives in villages.

In 1800, only five cities in the United States had more than 10,000 inhabitants, and less than 4 per cent of our total national population was located in these five cities; whereas in 1930, cities of this size, or larger, contained 47.6 per cent of the total population. According to the 1930 census, which classed towns with over 2500 inhabitants as urban, 56.2 per cent of the total population lived in cities. But if places with 1000 to 2500 inhabitants are also classed as urban, 60.1 per cent of the population lives in towns and cities; and if incorporated places of less than 1000 population are also included, this figure rises to 63.7 per cent.<sup>13</sup> Furthermore, there are thousands of other people who live in unincorporated places of this size.

In four states—Rhode Island, Massachusetts, New York, and New Jersey—the urban population constitutes more than 75 per cent of the total population and in two of them—Rhode Island and Massachusetts—over 95 per cent. The population of Greater New York today is almost twice that of the entire United States, including the Indians, when Washington was first elected president. Almost one-seventh of this country's total population lives in eight great cities: New York, Philadelphia, Chicago, Detroit, Los Angeles, St. Louis, Cleveland, and Boston.

Not only has the urban population increased more rapidly than the rural, but the larger urban centers have grown more rapidly than the smaller ones. Thousands of these smaller places have actually decreased in size during the past thirty years. A steady urbanization of our national population has been occurring for several decades, for farm families and rural young people have been leaving the rural districts for the city. The farmer's contacts with the town have been increasing, as have his relations with the larger urban centers either directly or through the smaller towns.

**Age and Sex Distribution of the Village Population.**—It was seen from the data presented in some detail in Chapter IV that the village population contains slightly more than its share of people in the lower age groups and considerably more than its

<sup>13</sup> *Fifteenth Census, Population*, vol. 1, p. 14.



share of old people, and that it stands about midway between the rural and urban populations in all the age groups up to 65 years, after which it outranks both of them. A comparison of the village and the total population per age group was presented in the table on page 68.

We saw also that the sex distribution of the village population differs considerably from that of the total population. The village has more males per 100 females than the city in every age group under 25 years; more than the farm population in the age groups 25-34, 35-44, and 85 and over, and more than the total population in all the age groups between 14 and 55 years and in those above 75 years. Detailed figures on the sex distribution of the population were given in Table 10, Chapter IV.

In his study of 77 typical villages, Fry found that in western villages there are a preponderance of men and relatively few unmarried women, the age and sex distribution is fairly normal in southern villages; the middle-western villages include many foreign-born people, both the age and the sex distribution following that of the country as a whole; and in eastern villages there is a great excess of women and old people.<sup>14</sup>

#### **The Increase or Decrease in the Village Population.—**

Data on whether the village population is increasing or decreasing are conflicting. For example, Gillette presents elaborate figures which indicate that the population of thousands of villages and unincorporated places decreased in each of the three decades between 1890 and 1920. He shows, for instance, that between 1910 and 1920 there was a decrease in 40.3 per cent of the places with a population of less than 500 people, in 36.6 per cent of those between 500 and 1000 population, and in 28.6 per cent of those whose population was between 1000 and 2500, these same places showed a similar tendency in the two preceding decades, although the percentages were smaller. After giving statistics on the population decrease for places with 2500 to 5000 inhabitants, 5000 to 10,000 inhabitants, 10,000 to 25,000, and over 25,000, he says: "The generalization seems warranted that the smaller the place, the greater is the liability of loss of population."<sup>15</sup> Table 113 gives the figures for places with less than 2500 population during these

<sup>14</sup> Fry, C. Luther, *American Villagers*, pp. 84-87.

<sup>15</sup> Gillette, J. M., *Rural Sociology*, p. 463.

three decades, and also for 1920-1930. The 1930 data are for towns only from 1000 to 2500 population.

TABLE 113—PERCENTAGE OF PLACES IN THE UNITED STATES HAVING LESS THAN 2500 INHABITANTS, LOSING POPULATION DURING THE FOUR DECADES ENDING 1900, 1910, 1920,<sup>16</sup> AND 1930<sup>17</sup>

Division	Percentage Losing			
	1930	1920	1910	1900
United States	29.9	36.7	24.0	24.0
New England	29.4	61.0	16.3	13.9
Middle Atlantic	18.8	39.2	26.6	33.0
East North Central	32.7	46.0	42.8	25.3
West North Central	41.4	28.3	28.1	20.1
South Atlantic	20.1	27.3	21.7	31.6
East South Central	17.9	34.0	30.1	26.7
West South Central	31.3	29.3	20.8	13.9
Mountain	35.9	31.2	18.1	29.0
Pacific	23.6	32.5	11.6	22.8

Fry's data indicate a different tendency for, although they do not show that all the villages are increasing in population, they do show an increase in the population of both incorporated villages and unincorporated places between 1900 and 1920, the increase being 41.4 and 48.0 per cent, respectively. During this period the rate of increase in the population of incorporated villages was five times as rapid as that for the surrounding country districts, and the rate in both incorporated and unincorporated villages was nine times as rapid as that of the strictly farm population. However, this rate of increase was not as rapid as that for the urban population, being almost 20 per cent slower.<sup>18</sup>

The most recent and probably most trustworthy data are given by Brunner and Kolb. They show that, between 1910 and 1930, the population of all villages increased at about the same rate as the national population, that for every seven villages that declined more than twenty per cent in population from 1910 to 1930 there were thirty that increased; that 24.7 per cent of them failed to change, 51.9 per cent increased more than one hundred in popula-

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 467

<sup>17</sup> *Fifteenth Census*, vol. 1, Population, Table 16

<sup>18</sup> Fry, C. Luther, *American Villagers*, pp. 39-56

tion, and 23.4 per cent lost one hundred or more; and that it is the small villages, those of less than 1000 population, that have remained stationary or declined.<sup>19</sup>

The data make it difficult to draw any positive conclusions. Therefore, probably all that is possible is to list the causes of the increase and decrease in the village population. The increase is probably due to the fact that:

1. A large portion of the population has moved away from the farms, and many of these people have settled in villages.

2. Because of good roads and automobiles, the crossroads stores, country churches and schools, country blacksmith shops, and similar enterprises have moved to villages and taken their employees with them.

3. The steady increase in the volume of farm production has increased the number of the so-called middle men

4. The demand for professional and commercial services has increased steadily; and consequently, in order to serve both the village and the farm population, many lawyers, insurance men, physicians, bankers, ministers, teachers, editors, realtors, recreation and amusement entrepreneurs, and even public officials must live in villages.

The decline in the village population is probably accounted for by the fact that:

1. Many village enterprises have been unable to compete successfully with city enterprises, and their employees have drifted to the cities.

2. The automobile makes it possible for the farmer to go to the larger towns and cities for all kinds of goods and services

3. Railroad service is poor, for many railroads which literally made certain small towns now stop only their slowest trains at these places.

4. Abandoned farms, mines, and other enterprises often leave behind them deserted villages.

#### THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE VILLAGE

**The Village as a Social Entity.**—The small town, which the census classifies as rural, has a corporate entity of its own and should therefore be considered in any discussion of rural welfare and efficiency. Although in many ways it can best serve its own

<sup>19</sup> Brunner and Kolb, *op. cit.*, pp. 74-85.

interests by serving those of the farm enterprise and the rural people around it, it must also take an interest in its own body, mind, and soul. Small towns have often been built because people thought it was better to live in them than in the open country; but is this actually the case? The small town has all too often been unmindful of its ability to answer this question affirmatively.

Although the town is an incorporated place with the legal power to develop the kind of life it wants, many rural towns are interested more in becoming industrial centers than wholesome residential places. Real estate enthusiasts boom the town to its own future detriment. Its chamber of commerce and its civic clubs strive to attract factories and mills, which often means the introduction of people and problems it is ill equipped to handle. The tragic mortality of small-town business, recreational, and social enterprises is due primarily to an overwrought enthusiasm for expansion or the absence of any adequate plans for a common civic life. A small town must provide all the institutions and agencies its standard of living demands, and it is therefore confronted by all the problems connected with food, housing, health, education, recreation, religion, and social contacts.

**Houses.**—The small town is more handicapped, from the point of view of good housing, than the open country with its lack of housing standards, or the city with its congestion. This is particularly true if the town is too small or too poor to provide a municipal water supply or adequate facilities for the disposal of sewage, sludge, and garbage. The fire hazard is much greater in the small town than in the open country, and fire protection is extremely poor. There is practically never any housing code, and people can therefore live in any kind of place without legal restriction or supervision. The home is often combined with the place of business—stores, garages, and the like; this not only often crowds the family into cramped quarters, but also limits the yard space and, in the case of the combination house and garage, constitutes a serious fire hazard. There are no restrictions on keeping poultry and livestock on the premises, and this makes for filth and the breeding of flies and disease germs. The fact that the small-town population is probably static, or even decreasing, offers little incentive for the improvement of residential property. Many homes are owned by someone else than their occupants, and they are allowed to fall into a state of disrepair if there is little likeli-

hood of their ever becoming valuable property. In short, the small home in a small town has all the disadvantages of the isolated country house, without the latter's advantages of space. The *Tentative Report* of the Committee on Farm and Village Housing makes the following comparison of farm and village houses:

In general, village houses appear to be newer than farm houses, except in the Tobacco-Bluegrass section . . . The percentages of village houses having at some time been painted are higher than for farm houses section by section, except the Corn Belt with 100 per cent of both farm and village houses painted. Also the village houses seem to be in better repair than the farm houses, except in the Great Basin, according to observations of field workers. . . . The smaller size of village houses is in accord with a smaller size of village family or household in all sections except the Great Basin . . . There is less indication of house overcrowding in villages than in farm houses for all other sections. . . . Village houses are more prevalently fitted with central heating equipment. . . . Electricity for lighting purposes is far more common in village than in farm houses. Piped-in water systems are more common in village than in farm homes for all sections . . . Likewise the village dwellings are more commonly equipped with stationary bathtubs and indoor water flush toilets.<sup>20</sup>

**Health and Sanitation.**—The sanitary condition of the rural town is of twofold significance, for it affects those who live in the town and those who trade there. Milk and other foods are distributed from common centers, and provisions for sanitary methods of handling them are often lacking in the small town. Slaughter yards, dumping grounds, and other civic nuisances are common, as are also open privies, open sewers, and cesspools. Surface wells often supply the homes with water, but even if the water is supplied by the town, inspection of the water supply is often inadequate—if not completely lacking—and, because of the possibility of pollution, the water constitutes a serious menace to the health of the townspeople. A stream or railroad tracks in the town often become a dump heap for old tin cans which contain decaying vegetables, and in many cases the stream becomes an open sewer. The town alleys are almost always accumulations of rubbish, and disease-spreading insects are plentiful for they

<sup>20</sup> President's Conference on Home Building and Home Ownership, *Tentative Report*, pp. 63-64.

find good breeding grounds and plenty of human hosts. As H. P. Douglass says, "The sanitation of the open country was bad enough, but the little town with the country's habits and without the city's remedies may easily be the most dangerous place of all."

In addition to the dump heap, the open sewer, the alley, and the open privy already mentioned, there are other eyesores in small towns—unsightly billboards; tumble-down buildings, badly laid out and dirty streets; barren school, church, and court yards; railroad stations, and uncared-for, weed-grown vacant lots. The small town need not be ugly, but in the absence of civic organizations and planning, its unsightliness often becomes actual ugliness.

**Morals in the Town.**—To cite Douglass again, there are two quite general opinions about the small town: "The little town is ugly, and the little town is bad." Another common saying has it that "God made the open country; man made the great city, but the devil made the little town." The little town is neither a neighborhood nor a metropolitan center, and it therefore lacks the stern ethics and code of morals of the country districts, and the laws, effective police regulation, and constructive social agencies of the great city. Town children have more free time, since as a rule they do not have chores and other tasks to occupy their idle moments, they are usually not under as close parental supervision as country children are, and consequently their play often degenerates into mischief, and even vice. Social status is more clearly defined and of greater importance in the small town than in the open country, and the opportunities for developing invidious attitudes and false values of human worth are plentiful. The average rural village has its "hangers-on"—the idle or semi-idle—who hang around corners and are anything but valuable elements in its mental and social life. The trickster, the cheap show, the street carnival, and other similar traveling parasites frequent the rural town, the tramp, the vagrant, the hoodlum, the prostitute and the petty thief who may be in the town "lock-up" become objects of morbid curiosity and idle talk. Unless active measures are taken, a "hang-out" may become a place for petty gambling, drinking, and indecent conversation. The small town, of itself, does not always connote badness, but it does offer many opportunities for evil which, in the absence of constructive social work, are likely to become fixed habits.

**Town Planning.**—The conversion of the small town into the civic and social center of the whole rural community of which it is a part would make it not only more prosperous, but also more beautiful, better organized, and better managed; and in addition the town would develop the pride and self-respect impossible as long as it is a "no man's land." What it needs is a consciousness of its civic entity and of its economic and social functions. If it were planned and managed as the center of the rural community, the neighboring farmers would no longer regard it as an anomaly in their midst, for it would be the home of their school, church, park and playground—in other words, the capital of the entire community. Civic clubs and similar organizations could eliminate its unsanitary aspects and its immoral elements, and its realization of its economic and social values would transform it into a well organized and ordered element in the social structure of the community as a whole.

### QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Describe a small town you know very well
2. What changes have you seen in small towns during the past ten years?
3. What is the profession of the most outstanding small-town man you know? Why is he outstanding?
4. Describe the types of people without occupation or profession, who live in the small towns you are familiar with
5. What do you think would be the result if every town with less than 2500 inhabitants were blotted out?
6. Compare housing conditions in the villages and small towns you know, with those in the surrounding agricultural sections. Are they better or worse?
7. Do you think the morals of the average town person are better or worse than those of the average country person?
8. Do you believe the population of small towns will increase or decrease in the future? Give reasons for your answer

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## CHAPTER XXVI

### TOWN-COUNTRY RELATIONS

#### THE TOWN-COUNTRY COMMUNITY

##### **Certain Town and Country Relationships Inevitable.—**

The rôle of the agricultural village in modern agriculture and rural life was discussed in the preceding chapter, and we saw that since modern farming is predominantly commercial—since it produces primarily for a market—its products must pass through towns and cities. The agricultural village was seen to be the first way station for farm products on their journey to the ends of the earth, and the last for the goods shipped to farms from all over the world. In other words, it is the trade capital of the agricultural community as a whole.

But many other functions are necessary in trading. Because farm products are largely seasonal, they are often unloaded in great quantities at shipping points over a short period of time, and they must be stored for future shipment; in addition, many farm products must be prepared for shipment—cured, dried, cleaned, or packaged. These functions are performed by agencies located in the town. Railroads have agents there to manage shipments, platforms, elevators, stockyards, and the like, financial agents are concentrated in towns, towns are telephone and telegraph centers, it is the merchants in the town who buy all kinds of goods to distribute to rural residents. All of these processes are as necessary today in carrying on agriculture as are plows and threshing machines.

A number of studies have been made of the trade areas of towns and villages—areas which might well be called agricultural commercial population units, of which the town is only one functional element.<sup>1</sup> A concrete description of the country town as a trade center is given in Tables 114 and 115, taken from a detailed study of the service relationships of town and country.

<sup>1</sup> See Galpin, C. J., "The Social Anatomy of an Agricultural Community", and Brunner, E. deS., Hughes, G. S., and Patten, M., *op cit*.

TABLE 114.—THE TOTAL BUSINESS AND THE FARM BUSINESS FOR 8 TOWNS  
COMPARED BY TYPES OF SERVICE, FOR THE YEAR 1920<sup>2</sup>

Types of Service	Number of Agencies	Total and Farm Business Compared in Per Cent and Number					
		In Per Cent			In Number		
		Total	Farmer	Other	Total	Farmer	Other
Total	227	100	72.2	27.8	\$6,497,489	\$4,694,560	\$1,802,929
Merchandising	129	100	75.6	24.4	5,494,887	4,155,856	1,339,031
Trades and repairs	39	100	77.2	22.8	381,584	294,468	87,116
Personal and professional	35	100	55.0	45.0	140,712	77,239	63,473
Transportation and communication	24	100	34.8	65.2	480,306	166,997	313,309

## OTHER CUSTOMERS, 1

Type of Service	Farmer and Other Family Customers in Per Cent and in Number					
	In Per Cent			In Number		
	Total	Farmer	Other	Total	Farmer	Other
Total	100	64.4	35.6	\$35,210	\$22,682	\$12,528
Merchandising	100	64.9	35.1	21,682	14,113	7,569
Trade and repairs	100	72.9	27.1	1,980	1,144	836
Personal and professional	100	68.0	32.0	6,570	4,468	2,102
Transportation and communication	100	53.4	46.6	4,978	2,657	2,321

**Other Natural Town-country Relationships.**—In addition to the interrelated functions just discussed, other functions seem to be naturally carried on jointly by town and country people. For example, almost every type of commercialized recreation can be carried on better in towns where electrical equipment and power machinery are available, and where crowds of people gather. Country people have the same desire and the same right to share

<sup>2</sup> Kolb, J. H., "Service Relations of Town and Country," *Research Bulletin No. 58*, University of Wisconsin Agricultural Experiment Station, Madison, pp. 9-10.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 25.

in these recreation and amusement facilities as anyone else, and the town furnishes them the opportunities

Schools, churches, hospitals, and libraries, which need a relatively large patronage for their efficient operation, are located in towns, but they serve country people as well as town people. Had modern means of transportation been in existence when the great agricultural sections of the country were first settled, it is possible that all the rural social agencies and institutions would have been located in towns and villages and many town-country conflicts which now exist would probably never have developed.

**The Structure of Town-country Communities.**—A town-country community does not include in its commercial functions all the activities of everyone who lives within its geographic limits, for no type of community does this. Even the old-time country neighborhood was not a community group, for each family existed as a separate unit, and the farm enterprise was entirely individual. The neighborhood included only the activity arising from the interrelationships created by the needs and desires which could be better satisfied by a larger group than the family, and the same thing is true of the town-country community. Geographically it includes the town and the country districts to whose people it furnishes various types of services. Because such institutions as schools, churches, and country stores were formerly located in the open country, and because it is now easy to ship various products over long distances, there is a great variation in the size of the country areas covered by the different town service agencies. However, many geographic areas may be called town-country communities, and a few such communities are shown in the following maps and graphs

TABLE 116—AVERAGE COMMUNITY AREA, IN SQUARE MILES, BY SIZE OF VILLAGE<sup>4</sup>

Region	All Villages	Small Villages	Medium Villages	Large Villages
Middle Atlantic	47 22	37 72	46 21	80 61
South	98 73	63 09	106 02	127 07
Middle West.	101 37	81 53	95 93	144 71
Far West	239 84	118 70	345 56	213 28

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 53.

There is also a wide variation in the geographical size of town-country communities in the different sections of the country. The data in Table 116 indicate some of these variations. In discussing

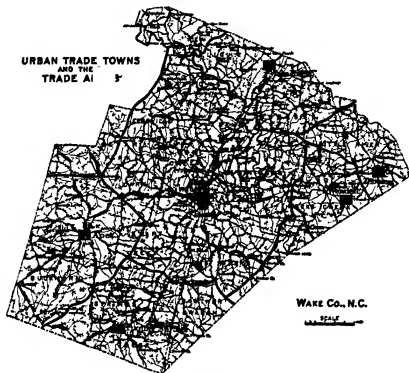


FIGURE 12

(From Zimmerman, C. C. and Taylor, Carl C., *op cit.*)

these variations, the authors of the book from which this table is taken make the following statement:

These results are not surprising. Villages in the Middle Atlantic states were founded in the days of the oxcart and the dirt road when travel was laborious and restricted, and many of them reached their peak in population before the Civil War. The South, with its plantation system, did not feel the need of village service, for the plantations were units sufficient unto themselves. The county seat alone was needed. Only with the break up of the plantation system have the Southern villages emerged. They are fewer in number in

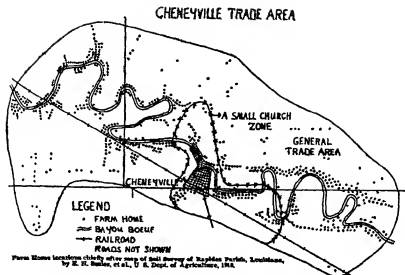


FIGURE 13.

(From Hayes, A. W., "Some Factors in Town and Country Relationship  
*Research Bulletin*, Tulane University, New Orleans, 1922, p. 31)

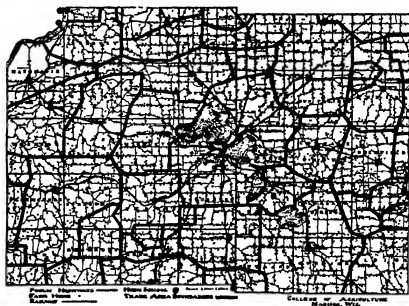


FIGURE 14.—TRADE AREAS OF DANE COUNTY, WISCONSIN  
 (From Galpin, C. J., and James, L. A., "Rural Relations of High Schools,"  
*Bulletin No. 288*, University of Wisconsin Agricultural Experiment Station,  
 Madison, 1918, p. 11)



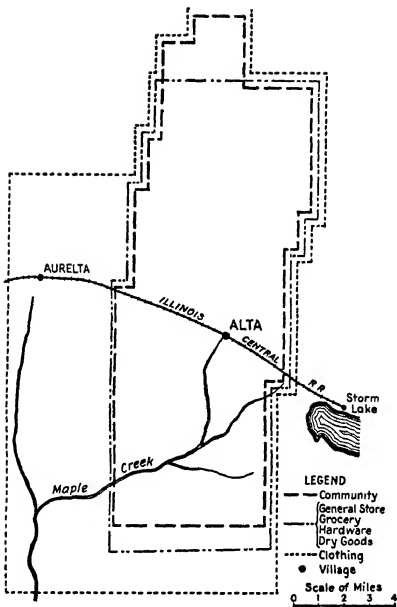


FIGURE 16—THE STRUCTURE OF THE VILLAGE COMMUNITY  
(From Brunner, E deS, Hughes, G S, and Patton, M, *op. cit.*, p. 73 )

dairy products or wheat, for instance—and “proximity of cities.”<sup>6</sup> Brunner and Kolb show that the size of the village community increased between 1924 and 1930, varying from 2 to 20 per cent, with an average increase of 8.8 square miles.<sup>7</sup>

#### URBAN-RURAL CONFLICTS

**Types of Conflicts.**—Notwithstanding the comparative mutuality of interest between the small town and the open country, and the essential unity of the rural community which includes both, suspicion and even open animosity have developed between the farmer and the townspeople. For example, the country man thinks the townsman “selfish” and “lazy,” and the latter considers the farmer both a “rube” and unbusinesslike; the country man accuses the townsman of robbing him by charging unduly high prices, and the townsman accuses the country man of being parsimonious. The existence of such opinions has at times created serious conflicts and split a community into factions whose strife threatened to end in physical violence in extreme cases. Thus, in the middle west, where the Granger movement attained its greatest development and where the Non-partisan League and other independent political movements have been most powerful, open conflict has often been very pronounced, but in the south, where the town merchant finances the farmer an entire year at a time and, in addition, is often his landlord, the conflict is not so open. It is possible, however, that under such conditions the feeling of suspicion and injustice is shared by both groups, and it is quite certain that the cleavage between the two groups is much greater.

The average farmer looks upon the small town as a bad influence. He does not want his sons to go to it too frequently, for it is the home of the speakeasy, the pool room, the public dance hall, the house of ill fame, and, above all, a place to squander money. He often carries this attitude to such an extreme that he would almost welcome the complete annihilation of the town. The townsman, on the other hand, often fails to realize that a prosperous and contented farm population is essential to his own prosperity and even to his very existence. These attitudes are inimical to both town and country, and they have created a social

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 54-57.

<sup>7</sup> *Recent Social Trends*, chap. iv.



atmosphere that must be dispelled before the larger community can be realized

**The Cause of Conflicts.**—Some indication has just been given as to why and how conflicts arise between country people and town people. A clear knowledge of their causes would eliminate most of them, for conflicts usually develop either from competition or misunderstandings, or both. Competition has been brought to the fore by the recent cooperative undertakings on the part of farm groups; their comparative isolation in the past has facilitated misunderstandings, or at least a failure to understand. The causes of urban-rural conflicts may be listed as follows:

1. Differences in occupations automatically create different modes of thinking. If an occupation is to be carried on successfully, it must have its own technique of operation, its own standards and measurements of efficiency and success, and its own type of mind. The farmer has gotten his training by such a slow and easy apprenticeship that he hardly realizes that his skill depends to any extent upon training, and therefore he fails to appreciate the need for skill and aptitude in running a grocery or a hardware store. This has been sadly demonstrated in the case of farmers' cooperative enterprises that have failed because of poor management. Because the farmer does not appreciate the training and skill necessary to manage even a small store successfully, he discounts the value of the village storekeeper and objects to the profits he makes. Furthermore, for generations the farmer has been little concerned with prices and profits; his criteria of success have been based on the successful management of a practically self-sufficient farm. Because he has produced on his own farm a large part of the goods which his standard of living demanded, he has handled comparatively little money. This small amount has naturally gone a long way, wherefore he thinks that the man who handles great sums of money is automatically growing unduly rich at the expense of the farmer with whom he deals.

The townsman, on the other hand, trained as he is in price and market operation, used to paying for everything he needs, and selling his goods on a profit-and-loss basis, does not appreciate the reason for the farmer's parsimony and his suspicion of all price dealings. Furthermore, unaware of the great amount of skill needed by the farmer and accustomed to the criteria of an entirely different occupation, he discounts the farmer's ability

and even his mentality. The failure of these two men of different occupations to realize each other's value is probably the greatest cause of their mutual distrust and lack of appreciation of the other.

2. The difference between urban and rural standards of living are very real, but they are even more apparent. The country person knows of the shorter working hours, the better clothes, the better homes, schools, and churches in the city, he sees the city man enjoying the advantages of electric lights, sidewalks, and municipal water and sewage-disposal systems; he sees city children idle or at play, and he knows that most of these things are not his to enjoy. Consequently he rebels against his own living conditions and blames them on the city person, either by some peculiar psychology of his own, or by imputing them to an unjust economic distribution. The city man, on the other hand, seeing the farmer living without these facilities, blames him for lacking urbanity, civility, and culture. The farmer resents this attitude even more than his lack of these facilities, and thus mutual misunderstandings, distrust and even conflict are created.

3. Townspeople often adopt city attitudes and as a result they consider themselves completely urbanized, whereas in reality their mode of life resembles that of the people in the adjacent country districts more than that of the people in the metropolitan centers. The small town reaches down to the farmer with one hand, and up to the city with the other. But even a small town is more cosmopolitan than the open country because of its various professions and occupations. The townsman is conscious of the advantages he enjoys in living in a town, and he regards them as a part of every city, great or small, and as opportunities which country people can neither have nor appreciate. Consequently he considers himself urbane, civil, polite, metropolitan and even cosmopolitan—attitudes which he displays freely to country people, particularly in social affairs. Needless to say, this contributes nothing to their mutual understanding and social congeniality.

4. The concentration of wealth in cities has resulted more or less naturally from the fact that it is there that economic and industrial processes are concentrated. This wealth is in the hands of comparatively few people, but these are the ones with whom the farmer deals—the bankers and the merchants—and it is their homes and their social status that catch his attention and imagina-

tion. This concentration of wealth strengthens his conviction that the city is robbing the country and that urban people have only a small appreciation of the difficulties of his work and the handicaps in his conditions of living. His belief that these wealthy people are an index of a great economic injustice may be perfectly justifiable, but since manual laborers and wage workers in the city suffer handicaps in living similar to his own, the issue is on a different plane than other urban-rural differences.

5. The presence of industrial groups, even in small towns, sometimes introduces into the population an element which has only a remote connection with agriculture. This increases the differences between town and country people and further separates their interests, thereby lessening the "consciousness of kind" which exists in towns where these elements are absent.

6. The purely commercial interests of some small trading centers make these centers anomalies to rural people. The rural community has not become commercial to any extent until comparatively recently, and any group or agency that follows no other principle but commerce impresses it as greedy and even immoral. Although the rural community may have comparatively poor institutional facilities, all of its institutions and the values they represent have been woven deeply into its people's lives. A purely commercial attitude and the predominance of commercial values to the exclusion of every other criterion irritate the farmer and cause him to discount the tradesman himself, as well as his interests and his criteria of values.

7. The economic influence of the more distant urban centers, which is reflected in the business practices of the small-town man, often force him into unfortunate relationships with his farmer customers. The farmer has for many years considered Wall Street his arch enemy, largely because he does not understand its operations and its place in the business world; but this name nevertheless represents real forces which are active in the relation between town and country dealers and detrimental to any mutual understanding and harmony between them. The town business man is forced into standardized business practices with his city wholesaler and banker, and he naturally carries these practices into his dealings with the farmer; the farmer's "agricultural paper" is discounted in the banks of the larger cities, and the standardized wholesale prices—and often the designated retail prices—of city

manufacturers are relayed to him. The farmer does not follow these practices in his own affairs or in his business relations with his neighbors, and he resents having to adopt them in his dealings with his merchant and his banker. Furthermore, there is little doubt that many small-town merchants and bankers have used the pressure of city dealers and banks as a means of increasing their own profits at the expense of the farmer who is ignorant of actual conditions.

8. Farm people have become increasingly class conscious because of their belief that they are different from city people, and this feeling has been intensified by their increasing knowledge of the common interests of farm people and the part of farming and farm people in world economy. The result has been an attempt on their part to assume many commercial functions in which they believe others have taken advantage of them. In the organization of these enterprises discussion of their "plight" has become widespread and exceedingly bitter at times; professional—or at least over-ardent—agitators have fed the flames of discontent, vividly picturing the differences in the economic and social status of city and country people. It was agitations such as these that gave rise to the Free Soil, Populist, and Independent parties and the Non-partisan League, of which the farmers have been ardent supporters. Urban people and urban vested interests have belittled almost every effort toward cooperation by the farmers, and have often struck back viciously at the latter's attempts to enter commercial and political arenas. Although many of the commercial and political undertakings have failed, these attitudes and activities on the part of city people have deeply embittered many farmers and have done more to increase their suspicion of city ways than any other factor which has been discussed.

The following quotation and Table 117 are taken from a study of town-country conflicts which was included in the report on American agricultural villages, previously referred to.

Careful inquiry was made to ascertain the causes of open conflict and of irritations that were generally regarded as likely to lead to conflict.

The basic cause of conflict is economic. There is a fundamental difference in function between the villagers who buy and sell and the farmers who produce crops. Specific conflicts usually arise through the failure of the village to function as a service station to

the satisfaction of the farmers. The villagers either do something, often unwittingly, that the farmers regard as opposed to their interests or they fail to do something that the farmers feel they should do. Because of the economic dependence of the villagers upon the country, they are more interested than the farmers in working out a satisfactory basis for village and open country relations.

The basic cause of antagonism between village and country can best be described as lack of mutual understanding. Specific causes are listed, together with the number of times each has been a factor in the situation, in Table [116].<sup>a</sup>

TABLE 117.—ACTIVE CAUSES OF FRICTION BETWEEN VILLAGE AND COUNTRY<sup>a</sup>

Cause	Cases Reported
Total	68
Inadvertent	17
Prices	17
School administration or program	10
Policy of farmers' cooperatives.	8
Credit and banking	8
Industry	4
Politics	4

### URBAN-RURAL COOPERATION

**Unconscious Cooperation.**—That both city and rural people are essential to our national economy is obvious, and that the small-town man and the farmer are a unit in this economy is equally obvious to the individual who lives in a great metropolitan center and regards these two groups as one, for to him it is all just "the country." For purposes of civic improvement, the small town must act independently as an incorporated area, but it must also work with the farmer to assure an adequate country life or its own efficiency. When, in the following quotation, Douglass speaks of the little town becoming "independent," he uses it in the sense of its relation to larger urban centers and to urban attitudes.

The little town is the primary trade center. The town's country is the area which trades with it, which makes common cause with it in buying and selling, in credit and transportation facilities. Its typical functionaries are the retail merchant, the middleman—who takes the

<sup>a</sup> Brunner, E. deS., Hughes, G. S., and Patten, M., *op. cit.*, pp. 97-98, 107-109.

<sup>b</sup> *Ibid*

farmer's produce and turns it over to the city for consumption—the banker, the postmaster, and the railway and express agents. The town's country is the area which comes to it for play, education, and worship. Here are the country's moving pictures, its baseball diamonds, and its Chautauquas. . . . The little town is his [the farmer's] school of fashion and of social propriety . . . The more radically the little town adopts the independent point of view the more adequately may it return later to a comprehension of its chief task; namely, the service of the open country on which it depends. After all this is its largest task. The material [and sound] fortunes of the little town and open country are identical; their achievements should be common. To fulfil its reasonable service the little town must appreciate and love the country.<sup>10</sup>

The small town cannot arbitrarily become the center of a rural community, nor can the latter arbitrarily select some town as the center of its economic and social activities. Institutions, agencies, and relationships of long standing have developed in both town and country, and these will persist in spite of the need for ideal community relationships. Churches, schools, country stores, small towns and large cities will continue to compete with the most ideally located and perfectly equipped small town. Manufacturers, national trade associations, and central church organizations will continue to influence adversely the location and work of many institutions and agencies which, under an ideal arrangement, would adjust themselves perfectly to a well organized and well ordered rural community and its town center. Like all social adjustments, these problems must work themselves out by experiment, elimination, and survival.

How thoroughly the country and the rural town cooperate unconsciously has been shown by several studies of town-country relationships—relationships which have arisen and become institutionalized in rural communities. The town becomes the center, in varying degrees, for the service agencies working in the surrounding country—buying, selling, finance, education, religion, recreation, and social associations; and these functions center in the town in the following order: (1) finance, (2) selling, (3) buying; (4) recreation; (5) education, high school education in particular; (6) religion; and (7) practical social association.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>10</sup> Douglass, H. P., *The Little Town*, pp. 10, 53, 54.

<sup>11</sup> See Hayes, A. W., "Some Factors in Town and Country Relations", Kolb, J. H., "Service Relations of Town and Country," and "Rural Primary Groups",

A town which is very small—below 1000 in population, for example—fails to supply all these services and is therefore less a center for the community, for country people have to go to the larger urban centers to satisfy many of their needs. On the other hand, too large a town—one with a population of 15,000 to 20,000 for example—ceases, at least relatively, to be a service center for farmers (although this of course varies in the different sections of the country), for the rural people are too much in the minority and consequently they locate social institutions of their own in the open country or the small urban centers. As Hayes says, “. . . As we descend from the small city to the cross-roads store, we find the farmer figuring more and more in the make-up of the town, in both its business and social life; but, while he gains in interest and in numbers, he loses in opportunities for the higher choices and standards available, and in the diversity of institutions. The substance of it all is, the farmer feels ‘at home’ in the small centers and does not in the city.”<sup>12</sup>

Various studies give further information on the influence of the size of the town. Hayes found in Louisiana that town-country social relationships were far more general in one town with a population of 500 than in three towns of over 3000 inhabitants. In his Wisconsin survey, Kolb found that, although “nearness” was the reason given most frequently by farmers for their contacts with one town rather than another, the town with a population of 2500 or 3000 was the best center for the service agencies for the surrounding country. In some of the most prosperous agricultural sections of the middle west, towns of 4000 and 5000 population are undoubtedly the most generally recognized and most widely used service and social centers for the adjacent rural districts. In New England many larger cities provide these facilities, while some of the Negro and tenant sections of the south are served by much smaller towns, the larger towns serving the land-owners.

What we wish to emphasize in this section is the fact that the rural town has unconsciously become an integral part of the rural

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Zimmerman, C. C., and Taylor, C. C., *op. cit.*; Galpin, C. J., “The Social Anatomy of an Agricultural Community”; Hoffer, C. R., and Cawood, M., “Service Institutions and Organizations in Town-Country Communities,” *Special Bulletin No. 208*, Michigan Agricultural Experiment Station, East Lansing, 1931

<sup>12</sup> Hayes, A. W., “Some Factors in Town and Country Relations,” p. 44

community, and that for every section of this country there is one type of rural town which best serves the farmers as an economic and social center. Furthermore, it is undoubtedly true that rural-urban relationships are gradually reintegrating themselves; as a result, the more suitably located and better-equipped towns will become the established service and social centers for rural communities, and the many smaller urban centers now in existence will lose this function or, possibly, ultimately be eliminated completely. This relationship between the rural town and the rural community can be brought about only by unconscious adjustment and survival, for the institutionalization of existing relationships will not at present give way to any consciously planned arrangement.

**The Need for Planned Cooperation.**—The friction and conflicts between town and country people have been a long time in arising, and, similarly, a consciousness of the mutuality of their interests and a technique of cooperation will be achieved slowly. We have seen that this consciousness and technique already exist to a considerable degree; but they can and should be consciously encouraged and developed even further. Chambers of commerce and civic clubs should recognize the farmer as a member of the business and civic community they represent and which they are seeking to serve. The farmer often is responsible for the greater part of the volume of business done in the small town, and he and his business interests should be represented in and served by these organizations. Although there have been several attempts in this direction, only limited success has as yet been achieved. Too often the chamber of commerce is little more than a Retail Merchant's Association, concerned chiefly with credit rating, price fixing, and closing hours. With a broader view of its place in the community, it would realize that the life and prosperity of business in a small town depend upon the prosperity of the farmers, and it would accordingly recognize the need for the inclusion of farmers in its membership. Hayes found, in his Louisiana study, that only twelve of the 552 members of the Chamber of Commerce of Alexandria were farmers, although a definite membership campaign had been conducted among the farmers. Alexandria, a small city with a population of 20,000, has become nationally known because of its attempts to include the adjacent agricultural districts as a part of the community it



serves. There were no farmers among the ninety members of its Rotary Club, and the Kiwanis Club had only two among its sixty members. Oakdale, a town with 8000 inhabitants, had no active program of cooperation with rural interests; however, its Chamber of Commerce fostered boys' and girls' club work and agricultural fairs, and numbered one farmer among its 142 members.<sup>13</sup>

The rural town can well afford to adopt a sympathetic and helpful attitude in cooperative enterprises, regardless of whether they are corporate or purely cooperative. Agricultural cooperation has been developing in Denmark for seventy years. At first the townspeople bitterly opposed the establishment of farmers' cooperative enterprises in the towns, sometimes even denying them the right to locate within the town limit.<sup>14</sup> But they have learned that it is not essential that the farmers and the town middle men be entirely separate groups, and in several towns farmers are now operating the banks and stores and manufacturing, wholesale and retail enterprises, and the towns are more prosperous than they were formerly. A similar situation has existed in the United States, for the bitterest opposition to farmers' cooperative marketing has often come from their own townspeople. If farmers held some of the stock in the stores, banks, and other business enterprises of the town, this would accomplish a great deal in eliminating the mutual distrust between town and country people, as has already been the case in several rural towns in this country.

The establishment, in the smaller towns, of social institutions for rural people is desirable from many points of view. There is of course the practical advantage of making public service facilities and water, light and sewage-disposal systems available to farm people. But if, in addition, educational and recreational facilities are located in the town, the coming and going of the rural children, and their constant mingling with the young people of the town, will create a subtle confidence that is difficult to achieve in purely commercial relationships. In his Wisconsin study, Kolb asked the question, "Where does the farmer prefer to have his social institutions located?" The young people chose the town much more frequently than the older ones did, and in

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>14</sup> Faber, H., *Cooperation in Danish Agriculture*, Longmans, Green and Company, London, 1918, pp. 55-70.

every case it was chosen for the church and school two or three times as frequently as the country. But before the school can be located in the town, both town and country people must be willing to enlarge the school district to include the rural area it should serve. At present the farmer often objects to having his property listed in such a district because of the higher tax rate, and accordingly his children are admitted to the town high school only by courtesy of the town school board, and a prescribed tuition fee is often required.

The following rather long quotation is presented in order to give something approaching a complete picture of one of the many cases in which town-country cooperation has been accomplished successfully.

On January 1, 1917, the citizens of the little village of Elgin, Nebr., and the surrounding country met to celebrate the consummation of their united efforts, to dedicate, in this town of less than 1000 inhabitants, a new community building, a civic achievement well worthy of their pride.

The building grew out of the fact that the town band was about to dissolve. A civic meeting was called, other civic needs became apparent, attention was centered on them by local leaders of enthusiasm and vision, community spirit was aroused, a club was deemed necessary as a working instrument, and the building was projected as a home for the club. The general purpose of the building was to serve as "a clearing house for all social activities." With this in view, the opera house was bought in 1916, reconstructed, and dedicated as the social center of the town and vicinity. Among the specific objects of the building were the following.

1. A home for the community club
2. Provision for rest and recreation facilities for town and country people
3. A general meeting place for local organizations, public and private
4. A place for lectures, entertainments, etc.
5. Development of civic pride and local citizenship through an open forum.
6. A public reading room and library
7. Development of the spirit of the community through encouragement of bands, choruses, sings, etc.
8. To give representative citizens control of the amusement enterprises of the community
9. To unite town and country forces for the welfare of both. . . .

The building is of brick, 40 by 80 feet, with two stories and basement. It is heated by steam, lighted by electricity, and has running hot and cold water.

On the first floor is an auditorium and moving picture room, 40 by 40 feet, containing 240 opera chairs and 60 movable chairs. At the front of the auditorium is a stage 15 by 40 feet, with a proscenium opening 14 by 21 feet, a roller curtain, and eight flies. There is also a women's rest room for members and all country women, furnished with tables, chairs, cribs, lounges, and toilet and lavatory facilities, a main lobby; the commissioner's office, which is also the box office, and a moving-picture booth of fireproof construction.

On the second floor are a reading and social room, a directors' room, a banquet hall with orchestra stage, also used as a gymnasium, a kitchen with complete equipment, a dining room and equipment, a dressing room, a lavatory, and baths. In the banquet room are 60 chairs and 8 folding tables.

In the basement are two bowling alleys, three billiard tables, a toilet room, and a furnace room.

The following organizations use the building: The Red Cross, the Boy Scouts, the Home Guards, the war loan committee, the Chautauqua company, the band, the Grand Army of the Republic, the fire department, the village board, the board of education, the ladies' club, the farmers' club, the farm bureau, private clubs, and the town library.

In addition to the activities connected with these organizations are the following: Lecture courses; weekly community club banquets, followed by business meetings, gymnasium work, recreation; games, moving pictures and traveling theatricals, contracted for and censored by the directors; local plays, musical entertainments, and recitals, a community Christmas tree; community celebrations of July 4 and Memorial Day, festivals; school exercises; private and club dances, conventions; receptions for visitors; and patriotic meetings.<sup>15</sup>

**The Town as a Part of the Rural Life Movement.**—Even the national leaders of rural life movements have failed to give due consideration to the place of the rural town in the rural community. The small town has been something of a "no man's land" until the present, for neither the great urban centers nor the rural people have recognized it as belonging to them. The large cities are right in this attitude, but the farmers are not. The rural town

<sup>15</sup> Nason, W. C., and Thompson, C. W., "Rural Community Buildings in the United States," *Bulletin No. 825*, United States Department of Agriculture, Washington, D. C., 1920, pp. 16, 19.

is now, and always has been, a part of the rural community, and it is time to recognize this fact and to plan definitely its place, its function, and its existence as a part of the social structure of every rural community.

### QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

- 1 Discuss the statement, "The little town is the farmer's, to do with as he pleases"
- 2 Describe a town-country community, if you know one
- 3 What is the difference between a trade-area community and the old-fashioned country community?
- 4 What conflicts between rural and small-town people do you yourself know of?
- 5 Why do inhabitants of small towns so often look down on country people?
- 6 Outline ways in which town and rural people could easily and profitably cooperate
- 7 What do you think of the idea of incorporating a town and the country district served by it into some kind of a municipal unit?

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## CHAPTER XXVII

### THE FARMER AND HIS GOVERNMENT

#### THE FARMER AND POLITICAL ACTION

**No Agrarian Party in the United States.**—The average man is less conscious of the institution of government than of any other institution by which he is continually influenced, and in which he constantly participates; and for this reason civic issues are usually neglected even by those who are actively interested in the other major activities of life. This is truer in the United States than it is in the older nations of our western civilization, and, as far as the farmers are concerned, truer here than in Canada. There is no recognized agrarian political party in the United States; in fact, it is doubtful whether the agrarianism which does exist is sufficiently class conscious to create a political party, and for this reason American farmers as a class do not exercise the clear-cut political influence exercised by farmers in certain other countries.

A bi-party system has existed practically throughout our national political history. Blocs representing major economic, religious, or other issues have never become a part of our scheme of political organization. We have no hereditary social classes, and consequently our population is, and has almost always been, heterogeneous. Our occupational groups have been in a state of flux. Our whole body of political, social and economic tradition has been based upon a philosophy of competition, equality, and individual independence, and only very recently have we thought of a labor group or an agrarian group. Furthermore, our farm population is scattered over such widely different sections, and there is such great diversity in our farm products, as to make each section an almost distinct economic group. The natural result of all these conditions is that farmers, like practically every other group, have adhered to old political loyalties instead of creating a party of their own.

**Tendencies toward Agrarian Politics.**—Notwithstanding the absence of an agrarian party, our farmers have several times in our national history made their influence felt through organized political activity. For example, during the last three decades of the nineteenth century, both state and national legislation felt the influence of the Grange, the Agricultural Wheel, and the Farmers' Alliance in no small way, and since 1900 the Farmers' Union, the American Society of Equity, the Non-Partisan League, and the Farm-Labor party have wielded considerable, though spasmodic, influence in several states, and even in the nation itself. The farmer's voice has probably never been more eagerly and earnestly listened to than it has since 1920. Three of our presidents since then have appointed agricultural commissions to study agrarian problems and recommend policies, and Congress, by enacting several acts, has sought to offer assistance to the agricultural interests. Agricultural planks are included in the party platforms of the men running for president, governor, and national and state legislatures. Several farmer organizations have been successful in demanding the appointment or election of "dirt farmers" to government boards and offices, and several of them have national legislative representatives and committees constantly at work.

According to a rather detailed study of farmers in politics, farmers tend, consciously or unconsciously, to show some unanimity in political attitudes and activities.<sup>1</sup> This study shows further a definite correlation between political insurgency and ruralism, for 50 per cent or more of the population of 15 of the 18 states classified as insurgent in this study was rural at the time of the 1920 census.<sup>2</sup> In 1922, Governor Pinchot received his strongest support from the farm sections of Pennsylvania, partly due, undoubtedly, to his earlier connection with rural interests. In 1920, the farmers of the State of Washington joined other progressive groups in a united political program. In the Wisconsin primary, 1920, the Non-Partisan League and the American Society of Equity threw their strength to Governor Blaine, who received 38.8 per cent of the vote of the unincorporated areas in the state,

<sup>1</sup> Rice, S. A., "Farmers and Workers in American Politics," *Columbia University Studies in History, Economics and Public Law*, vol. cxiii, no. 2, whole no. 253.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 50-51.

but only 29 per cent of the total Republican primary vote. The Farmer-Labor party in Minnesota has elected two United States Senators; in 1922, the unincorporated areas gave Senator Shipstead 57.4 per cent of their vote, whereas he received only 45.5 per cent of the total vote. Political campaigns and elections in North and South Dakota, Iowa, and Nebraska between 1919 and 1922 show the same tendency for farmers to cast their vote for farm causes and candidates with considerable unanimity.<sup>3</sup>

**Outstanding Examples of Organized Political Activity by Farmers.**—At various times in our history, farmers have gained such heights of political agitation as to cause state and national upheavals—Andrew Jackson's election in 1828 was to no small extent the result of a western farmer protest against eastern political domination. Other cases, most of which are discussed in greater detail in the following chapter, are the Granger era of the early 'seventies, the Greenback party of the late 'seventies and early 'eighties, the Populist movement of the late 'eighties and early 'nineties, the Non-Partisan League between 1915 and 1919, the Farmer-Labor groups since 1920, and the Farm Bloc of 1921.

Between 1872 and 1875 the Grange became the dominant political influence in half a dozen states. It elected a large enough number of the state legislators in Illinois and Iowa to control the legislatures; it supported the Reform, Independent, and Anti-monopoly parties in Illinois, Iowa, Kansas, Nebraska, Minnesota, Wisconsin, Indiana, Missouri, California, and Oregon, and through these parties, or otherwise, elected governors, legislators, and other state officials.<sup>4</sup> It sponsored some thirty political issues in the various states and in the nation at large. Some of these were purely local and comparatively trivial, but others were of the greatest concern to farming and the well-being of the rural population, as, for example, railroad regulation, the establishment of state boards of agriculture, ample appropriations for state agricultural colleges, compulsory education, development of water transportation, the establishment of a federal Bureau of Agriculture, improvement of the Weather Bureau service, national regulation of weights and measures, and commercial treaties opening world markets to our agricultural products. But not all

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 150-175

<sup>4</sup> Buck, S., *The Granger Movement*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, 1913, chaps. IV, V, VI



of the issues and policies undertaken by the Grangers resulted in successful legislation; and it is our purpose here merely to show that for half a decade the farmers organized sufficiently effectually to exert political influence and accomplish some results.

The Greenback party, which arose in 1874 and adopted a national platform in 1876, was by no means solely a farmers' party, but it was the west, where the greenbacks were considered most necessary, that in 1878, at the height of the movement, gave the party almost two-thirds of its strength. For example, in Texas, a predominantly rural state, it elected ten representatives to the state legislature, and one United States Congressman; and General W. H. Hamman, its candidate for governor in 1878, received 55,000 votes, or about 33 per cent of the total. However, the Greenback party was short lived, practically ceasing to exist after 1884.

In some ways, the Farmers' Alliance created a greater political upheaval than the Grange did. By combining three large farmers' organizations—the Texas Farmers' Alliance, the Louisiana Farmers' Union, and the Arkansas Agricultural Wheel—and working in political harmony with the Northwestern Alliance, it swept into its ranks probably two million farmers. In the late 'eighties and early 'nineties this consolidated rural constituency was the center of the Populist movement in several states. In 1896, although the Populist party was far from being purely agrarian, it and its forerunners were widely supported by the farmers. In 1888 the Union-Labor ticket received its chief support from the middle-western states;<sup>5</sup> in 1892, the Populist party was supported almost unanimously by both the Southern Alliance and the Northwestern Alliance. "Sockless" Jerry Simpson and W. A. Pepper, Kansas farmers, were sent to Congress. In several southern states the farmers actually took over the Democratic party machinery; in other southern and some middle-western states they fused with the minority party, and in a few of the middle-western and western states they formed independent parties. In the national election of 1890, the Farmers' Alliance elected its candidates for governor in Texas, Georgia, South Carolina and Tennessee, and sent more than forty representatives

<sup>5</sup> Buck, S., *The Agrarian Crusade*, Yale University Press, New Haven, 1921, p. 127.

to Congress; and Alliance representatives had majorities in the legislatures in eight southern states.

The Non-Partisan League is probably the best-known farmer organization, because it is comparatively new. Avowedly political in its purposes, it arose in North Dakota in 1915, and in less than six months had 20,000 members. Before the beginning of its decline in 1920, it had spread to thirteen states and had a membership of almost 235,000 farmers. It operated on the basis of a definite paid membership and a non-partisan platform; it selected candidates who would promise to support farm measures and threw its political strength to them, regardless of their party affiliations. In the fall of 1916 it elected the governor of North Dakota, eighty-one of the one hundred and sixteen members of the lower house, eighteen of the twenty-two senators, and all other state officials except one, and in 1918 it elected its whole ticket.<sup>6</sup>

The Farmer-Labor party is the most recent definitely organized political effort on the part of farmers. Since it is a coalition between farmers and industrial workers, it is not purely agrarian. On the other hand, the Farmer-Labor vote by no means represented all of the agrarian vote, which was more or less unified in the national election of 1924. The Farmer-Labor party has never risen to any particular significance as a national force. Like the Non-Partisan League, it centered in the middle northwest. In 1920 it placed a presidential candidate in the field who polled 265,411 popular, but no electoral, votes. In 1924 it made a considerable attempt to mobilize the discontented farmers under its banner, but this was not achieved, for they scattered and later supported La Follette to some extent. Although the La Follette support was by no means entirely agrarian, it was the farmers who supported him in the majority of the states where his electoral vote was of any size. More than 20 per cent of the total vote in fourteen states was cast for the La Follette electors. Eleven of these states are predominantly rural, from 51 to 79 per cent of their population in 1920 were living in the open country or in towns of 2500 population or less. Table 118 gives itemized statistics for these fourteen states.

<sup>6</sup> Gaston, H. E., *The Non-Partisan League*, Harcourt, Brace and Company, New York, 1920, Bruce, A. A., *The Non-Partisan League*, The Macmillan Company, New York, 1921.

## 630 THE FARMER AND HIS GOVERNMENT

TABLE 118—STATES IN WHICH MORE THAN 20 PER CENT OF THE POPULAR VOTE WAS CAST FOR LA FOLLETTE ELECTORS IN 1924<sup>1</sup>

State	Per Cent of Total Vote	Per Cent of State Population that Is Radical
Arizona	23 3	78 3
California	33 1	32 0*
Colorado	20 4	51 8
Idaho	36 2	72 4
Illinois	21 1	32 1
Iowa	28 1	53 6
Montana	37 6	68 7
Nebraska	23 0	68 7
Nevada	36 4	80 3
Oregon	24 3	50 1
Utah	20 8	52 0
Washington	35 7	44 8
Wisconsin	53 8	52 7
Wyoming	21 6	70 5

\* Tied up with the Socialist ticket

**The Farmers and National Political Parties.**—From what has been said in the preceding sections, it is clear that, at different periods in our national life, large blocs of farmers have thrown their support to the party which they thought represented their viewpoint and would fight for their interests. However, since no one of these parties has ever been purely agrarian, it is impossible to calculate exactly what proportion of their strength was derived from their farm constituency and what proportion came from other constituencies. The parties listed in Table 119 are those to which farmers have attached themselves in considerable numbers during the last seventy-five years.

It must not be assumed from this table that these parties were agrarian, for the table is presented only to indicate the recurrent tendency toward a slight degree of political unity among farmers. From 1876 to 1884, the Greenback party unquestionably attracted a great part of the farm constituency which had been represented in the independent parties of the Granger era. The Farmers' Alliance represented the Populist party from 1892 to 1908 more than did any other organization, and the La Follette strength was

<sup>1</sup> *World Almanac*, 1926, The New York World, New York.

TABLE 119.—FARMERS' PARTIES REPRESENTED IN NATIONAL ELECTIONS BE-

Presidential Election Year	Party	Per Cent of Total Popular Votes
1848	Free Soil	10 1
1852	Free Soil	4 9
1856	There is no evidence that the farmers rallied in great numbers to the "Know-Nothing party "	
1860		
1864		
1868		
1872	Labor Reform	39
1876	Greenback	97
1880	Greenback	3 3
1884	Greenback and Anti-Monopoly	1 5
1888	Union-Labor	1 3
1892	People's (Populist)	8 5
1896	People's-Democrat (Populist)	48 4
1900	People's	36
1904	People's	85
1908	People's	19
1912		
1916		
1920	Farmer-Labor	1 0
1924	Independent, etc (La Follette group)	13 1

more or less a culmination of the influence of the Non-Partisan League and the Farmer-Labor party

The national election of 1928 presented no rural-urban issues which definitely differentiated the farmer vote. It has been popularly assumed that Governor Smith's stand on prohibition deeply offended our proverbially temperance-minded farmers, and it is true that agricultural states which for decades had been traditionally Democratic returned large Republican majorities in this election. Other issues, however, served to cloud the issue. Ogburn and Talbot made a study of five factors or influences in this election which, tested by an elaborate statistical technique, seem to constitute a trustworthy criterion—"foreign born," "urban population," "past Democratic vote," "Catholics," and "wet voters"; and while it is true that, as measured by referenda, the "wet

\* *The World Almanac* for 1924 provides a good short survey of these parties and their platforms

voters" proved to be the most influential factor in the Smith vote, there was little evidence to show that this wet vote was divided in any consistent way on an urban-rural basis. According to Ogburn and Talbot, "The urban influence was not as strong for Smith as many persons seem to think . . . Indeed, our analysis shows that when the influences of religion, drink, and immigration are removed from the urban influence, it went slightly more for Hoover than for Smith. Even when these influences are not removed, the urban factor was only slightly pro-Smith. This election does not seem to have called forth any special rural or urban influence as such for either side."<sup>9</sup>

Farmer discontent undoubtedly swung many agrarian states into the Democratic column in 1932, but labor discontent did the same thing for industrial states, and therefore there can be made no calculation of strictly urban-rural differentiation of the result of this election.

It would be hard to say whether a tendency to political unity, on the part of American farmers, is slowly developing, but it is certain that for the last few years they have shown a more marked tendency to independent voting than has any other occupational group in America. The United Farmers of British Columbia, in Canada, have gone farther than mere independent voting, for they have nominated and elected their candidates and set up their farmer government, thus being recognized by themselves and others as an agrarian political group. Clearly defined agrarian political parties exist also in several European countries. It is possible that American farmers may eventually cause the final breakdown of our two-party system; and some grounds for expecting this are found in the sporadic cases, several times in the past, where farmers have voted with some degree of unity of purpose, and in their marked tendency to independent voting at the present time.

#### THE FARMER AND THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

**The Federal Government Influenced by Farmers.**—The influence of our farmers on the federal government and the latter's services to them cannot be measured by the number of farmers holding federal offices or sitting in Congress, for they are few in

<sup>9</sup> Ogburn, W. F., and Talbot, N. S., "The Measurement of the Factors in the Presidential Election of 1928," *Social Forces*, vol. viii, no. 2, pp. 175-183.

number. But, like every other citizen, farmers vote for those who hold federal elective offices; furthermore, the federal government is tending more and more to register public opinion rather than a clash of personalities. Therefore, the fact that farmers do not as a rule hold federal offices is no indication that their interests are not, or at least cannot be, well represented in the federal government. With the exception of such sporadic political outbursts as those described in the preceding section, farmers have for the most part been an isolated, occupational-minded group, plodding along at their daily work, often chafing under what they thought were injustices, but without the knowledge or power to combat them. Organization, education, and cooperation have put the farmer in a position to make his wants known and his voice heard in Washington, and he is gradually learning something of both politics and legislative methods. As a result, large and representative farmers' organizations now wield considerable political influence in elections and practically always have legislative programs which they push vigorously.

Both the Grange and the Alliance claim credit for a number of definite accomplishments in national politics, but whether or not their claims are justified, they were undoubtedly instrumental in bringing about the inclusion of the Secretary of Agriculture as a member of the President's Cabinet. They influenced railroad legislation, and were probably the first to start the agitation which resulted in the creation of the Interstate Commerce Commission; they supplied organized propaganda for the establishment of the rural free delivery, and their views on the alienation of land probably had some part in securing a change of policy in handling the public domain. In addition to participating in these and similar organized political endeavors, the farmers have recently become more active in shaping public opinion than has been the case for a century, for they constantly discuss social, economic, and political issues in their local, district, state, and national farm organizations, these organizations appoint legislative committees and thus persistently push their claims in Congress, even carrying them to the President himself. After listing the most important measures sponsored by the Populist party which have since been enacted into law, Hicks says, "It would be idle to indulge in a *post hoc* argument in an attempt to prove that all of these developments were due to Populism; but the intensive study of agricul-

tural problems that led ultimately to these measures did begin with the efforts of sound economists to answer the arguments of the Populists, and it is evident that in the end the economists conceded nearly every point for which the Populists had contended"<sup>10</sup>

The Farm Bloc was organized at the Washington headquarters of the American Farm Bureau Federation when, on May 9, 1921, twelve Senators and twelve Representatives, all representing farmer constituencies, met to decide on a program for immediate action (Later there were twenty-two Senators and probably three times that many Representatives ) They first organized themselves in four major committees—on Transportation, on the Federal Reserve Act, on Commodity Financing, and on Miscellaneous Agricultural Bills—for the purpose of getting direct and immediate action on "farm relief measures " The purposes they were working for were a direct response to the demands from organized farmers, thousands of whom had discussed these questions, more or less intelligently, often at their regular farm organization meetings, and Senator Capper describes their program as seeking to achieve approximately the following purposes

- 1 A complete rural credit organization to provide farmers and stockmen with an adequate financial system
2. Reduction of railway freight rates and the repeal of Section 15A of the Esch-Cummins law which gives the Interstate Commerce Commission control over interstate rates, also the repeal of other objectionable sections of that law.
- 3 Legislation to establish a better system for marketing farm products.
4. Legislation to turn Muscle Shoals over to Henry Ford.
5. Tax undistributed surpluses and stock dividends
6. Stop the further issue of tax-exempt securities<sup>11</sup>

In 1920, the National Board of Farm Organizations sent to candidates the following questions in order to learn their position on matters which the farmers in these organizations were convinced needed governmental action .

- 1 Will you do your best to bring about such direct dealing between producer and consumer as will secure to the farmers a fair

<sup>10</sup> Hicks, J. D., *The Populist Revolt*, The University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, 1931, p. 416

<sup>11</sup> Capper, A., *The Agricultural Bloc*, Harcourt, Brace and Company, New York, 1922.

share of the wealth they create, reduce the cost of living to the consumer, and limit or destroy the opportunity of the profiteer?

2 Will you do all that in you lies to secure to all farmers and consumers the full, free, and unquestioned right to organize and to purchase and sell cooperatively?

3 Will you see that the farm people of America are represented on general boards and commissions, in whose membership various interests are recognized, whether or not the work is directly concerned with agriculture?

4 Will you appoint a Secretary of Agriculture who knows actual farm conditions, who is satisfactory to the farm organizations of America, and who will cause to be made comprehensive studies of farm production costs at home and abroad, and publish the uncensored facts?

5 Will you take the action necessary to ascertain and make public all obtainable facts concerning the great and growing evil of farm tenancy, so that steps may be taken to check, reduce, or end it?

6 Will you do your best to secure improved personal and commodity credit facilities on reasonable terms, for farmers?

7 Will you earnestly endeavor to secure to cooperative organizations of farmers engaged in interstate commerce, service and supplies equal in all respects to those furnished private enterprises under like circumstances?

8 The railroads have been returned to their owners. If at the end of two years of further trial of private ownership the railroads fail to render reasonably satisfactory service to the people, will you then favor re-opening the railroad question?

9 Will you use your best efforts to secure the payment of the war debt, chiefly through a highly graduated income tax or, otherwise, by those best able to pay?

10 Will you earnestly strive to uphold and enforce the national conservation policy, and especially to stop forest devastation, which has already more than doubled the price of lumber and paper to the consumer?

11 Will you do your best to secure and enforce effective national control over the packers and other great interstate combinations of capital engaged in the manufacture, transportation, or distribution of food and other farm products and farmers' supplies?

12 Will you respect, and earnestly strive to maintain, the right of free speech, free press, and free assembly?<sup>12</sup>

At a conference held on January 6, 7, and 8, 1932, the three largest farm organizations in the country, representing well over

<sup>12</sup> Mimeographed circular from the National Board of Farm Organizations.



2,000,000 farmers, agreed on a six-plank legislative program which they say they expect to push steadily until all six are enacted into law. The following is a synopsis of these six planks:

1. Continuance of the agricultural marketing act, and its amendment immediately to include "the Debenture Plan, Equalization Fee, or any other method which will make it effective in controlling surpluses, in making tariffs effective on farm crops and in securing for American farmers cost of production on those portions of their crops sold for consumption in our own nation."

2. Insistence that the main income for the federal government be derived from personal income, corporation and estate taxes, and that the rates of taxation be increased on higher incomes.

3. Insistence that the Federal Reserve credit contraction and deflation stop at once, and that consideration be given to "the readjustment of the entire banking and fiscal policies and structures of the United States."

4. Equality in tariff rates for farm products when it can be provided advantageously, and substitutes when it cannot.

5. "Such legislation as is necessary to prevent short selling on commodity or other exchanges."

6. Independence of the Philippines at the earliest possible time so as to cut off "unfair competition of Philippine products in our domestic markets."<sup>18</sup>

No attempt is made here to give a complete record of the farmers' efforts to influence the federal government; these few illustrations are given merely to show that farmers have at times been both vocal and influential on various national issues.

**Agriculture Aided by the Federal Government.**—Some people hold that the extent to which the federal government aids agriculture works an injustice to other industries and other classes of people; but since agriculture is more basic than any other industry, and since the whole citizenry benefits from agricultural production and efficiency, it should receive assistance from the government. Farmers, and many of their so-called leaders, do not recognize—or possibly they do not know—the extent to which the government aids agriculture, and for this reason their attitude toward federal taxes and their criticism of "centralized government" are both unjust and unintelligent. The farmer should be an enlightened national citizen, if for no other reason than the

<sup>18</sup> *Bureau Farmer*, Chicago, 1932, p. 7.

aid he and his enterprise receive from the government, a few instances of which are listed.

The first Morrill Act, passed in 1862, provided for the establishment of a College of Agriculture and Mechanic Arts in each state, and for a grant to each state of 30,000 acres of land, excluding mineral deposits, for each of its Senators and Representatives. The second Morrill Act, passed in 1890, provided an income of \$25,000 to each state, and this was increased to \$50,000 by the Nelson Amendment, passed in 1907. In 1887 Congress passed the Hatch Act, which provided for an agricultural experiment station in each state, each one to be supported by an annual appropriation of \$15,000. The Adams Act of 1906 increased this annual appropriation to \$30,000 for each station, and the Purnell Act of 1925 formulated a program whereby these funds, when met by annual congressional appropriations, are increased to \$90,000 for each station.

The Smith-Lever Act of 1914 provided for agricultural extension work to be done by each state college of agriculture. The maximum annual federal appropriation under this law, amounting to \$4,580,000, was reached by degrees, beginning with \$480,000 in 1914 and reaching the maximum in 1922, the average appropriation per state being \$97,500.

The Smith-Hughes Act, discussed previously in connection with education, was passed in 1917. It reached its maximum annual federal appropriation of \$3,000,000 in 1926, an average per state of \$62,541.66.

The Purnell Act, providing for additional support for experiment stations, reached its maximum federal appropriation of \$2,880,000 in 1929.

The Capper-Ketchum Act of 1929 increased appropriations for agricultural extension work by \$1,480,000.

The total sum expended by the federal government for the fiscal year 1930-1931, under the provisions of these various acts, was \$16,441,102, in addition to the return on the original land grants. Excluding the Smith-Hughes funds and the federal road funds, and including the federal support given to vocational agricultural schools, the amount is approximately \$20,000,000. These acts do not provide for an equal division of the funds among the states, but if each state shared equally, it would receive \$416,666.66; the

states that are well populated and predominantly rural now receive twice this amount.

The United States Department of Agriculture exists only to assist farm enterprises. It is composed of sixteen bureaus and employs 23,000 persons; its total expenditures for the fiscal year 1930-1931 were \$313,543,238.<sup>14</sup> The Department of the Interior also has certain functions which are agricultural, and the Department of Commerce renders a great service to farm enterprises.

The sole function of the Federal Farm Board, created by the Agricultural Marketing Act of 1929, is assisting agriculture. A revolving fund of \$500,000,000 was created with which to start its work, but its average annual federal expenditures are not yet known (1933) because commodities, especially wheat and cotton, have been disposed of by Congress for charity to others than farmers.

The Interstate Commerce Commission, which certain farm organizations claim came into existence through their efforts, touches the farmer in various ways in its work with transportation rates. The Federal Trade Commission has investigated several industrial and commercial combinations which farmers believed were discriminating against them in some way. The Federal Reserve Board, with its federal farm loan and intermediate bank functions, is also serving the farmer.

#### THE FARMER AND STATE GOVERNMENT

**The Farmer's Relation to his State Government.**—The citizens control state government much more directly than the federal government, not so much because public opinion plays a larger rôle in state government, but because the representatives elected by the people play a relatively greater rôle. United States Senators were not elected by the direct vote of the people until 1916, but state legislative officers have always been thus elected. There are only 96 Senators and 435 Representatives, but the people who elect these 531 federal legislators elect about 2400 senators and 5000 representatives to the various state legislatures. Many voters know their state legislators personally, and for this reason state government can and must respond much more directly to the personal demands of its constituency.

It has apparently been impossible to determine the percentage of

<sup>14</sup> *Report of the Secretary of Agriculture, 1931, Washington, D. C.*

state legislators who are farmers by occupation, but there is sufficient evidence to indicate that it is greater for state than federal legislators. This means, of course, a vastly greater proportion of farmer legislators, because of the greater number of state legislative offices. It is questionable whether more than four or five federal Senators can rightly call themselves farmers. It is true that many of them may own land and thus operate farms indirectly, but they are also engaged in other enterprises and professions. On the other hand, 14.1 and 35.2 per cent of the general legislative assemblies of Ohio and Iowa, respectively, are farmers,<sup>16</sup> the percentage of farmers in the lower house greatly exceeding that in the upper house. This is apparently due to the fact that there is a greater number of representatives than senators, the usual average being about one representative to each county; consequently the individual who runs for office is thus personally known to the voters. The writer has been unsuccessful in his attempts to obtain statistics on this point from every state; but, on the basis of the information he has received, he calculates that, on an average, about 15 per cent of the state legislators are farmers by occupation, this figure being much higher in the middle-western, northwestern, and southern states, and considerably lower in the New England and northeastern states.

Farmers use practically every method described in the section on the federal government to influence state legislation, and their efforts are usually more effective. The major part of the population of thirty states is rural, and consequently many state representatives are elected by almost wholly rural constituencies, with the result that the officials of these states find it necessary to their political life to respond directly to farm interests and farmer demands.

**State Assistance to the Farmer.**—The state governments do not maintain as many agricultural service agencies as does the federal government, although most of them have state departments of agriculture, all have state agricultural colleges, many have conservation departments, and a few have colonization and settlement boards. South Dakota and Minnesota have rural credit bureaus. In a few cases education is controlled by the state, and state road systems are rapidly coming into existence. Pennsylvania, New York, and South Carolina have state rural police

<sup>16</sup> Vogt, P. L., *op. cit.*, p. 230.

systems. All in all, however, it is state legislation enacted for farm interests and local legislation passed by the state legislatures which serve the farm constituency, rather than state agricultural service agencies.

#### THE FARMER AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT

**The Farmer and County Government.**—County government is more nearly controlled and operated by farmers than any other unit of government in the United States. The county system arose in the south, where conditions made impossible or impracticable the New England system of local government, and it spread throughout large sections of the country as agriculture expanded. It provides almost all of the governmental machinery with which the farmer comes into direct touch, and is also the agency through which a large part of the administration of state and federal governments comes to him. Its usual functions are to care for the poor, to maintain a system of public roads and bridges, to maintain the public peace, to keep records of property transfers, to provide for the administration of justice, to maintain educational standards for all the county schools, to probate wills, to provide and maintain a court house, a jail, and other public buildings, to administer tax machinery, and to provide for elections. These are the most important day-by-day and year-by-year functions of government with which the farmer is directly concerned, and therefore in actual practice the county is the unit of government he uses most.

In the states which have no township organization, the county governing body is usually called the "board of county commissioners," and consists of from three to five members elected at large. In states where the government combines the township and county forms, this body is called the "board of supervisors," and each township elects one member. These offices are probably more generally held by farmers than any other political offices in this country, for most of the offices in the states where townships exist must necessarily be held by them because there are no urban centers in a great many townships; and in the states where townships are not required by law, the desirability of having each section of the county represented usually fills these offices with persons from the outlying districts—that is, with farmers. In addition to the county commissioners or supervisors, most coun-

ties still maintain a long list of elective offices—ten is probably an average number—and usually at least half of these also are filled by farmers.

The list of county officials or employees has recently been increased by the addition of several other officers who give various expert services. The county farm and home demonstration agents, county health officers, and county welfare officers serve the county's farm population primarily, and the chief work of the county surveyor, or engineer, is done outside incorporated places.

**The Weaknesses of Local Government.**—It is quite generally admitted that county government is probably the weakest link in our whole governmental machinery, and the reasons are obvious. The county government has no head, such as a governor or president; and entirely too many of its elective officers are chosen solely on the basis of their national party allegiance, which is of little importance in local affairs. It seldom has a uniform or systematic accounting system. It provides no adequate rural police force, and little supervision of rural health and sanitation. Its funds are usually low because it is supported by property taxes, and assessments or valuations are kept down. The term of office for its elective officers is short, and the more substantial citizens usually refuse to neglect their own affairs for the sake of holding offices which carry no greater distinction than those of county officials.

T. B. Manny attempted to study the attitudes toward rural government, dealing chiefly with township and county government.<sup>16</sup> A few of the most pertinent facts and conclusions of his study appear in Tables 120 and 121.

TABLE 120—PERCENTAGE OF CITIZENS WHO ACTUALLY VOTE IN LOCAL ELECTIONS, AS ESTIMATED BY CORRESPONDENTS<sup>17</sup>

Location of Correspondents	Farmers	Officials	Teachers	Average*
New England towns	53 6	64 3	67 5	59 9
Township areas	60 5	57 8	45 0	58 9
County areas	63 0	64 5	41 2	63 0
Average	60 0	61 2	47 0	60 4

\* All averages are weighted averages of all the replies under each classification.

<sup>16</sup> Manny, T. B., *Rural Municipalities*, The Century Company, New York, 1913.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 116.

## 642 THE FARMER AND HIS GOVERNMENT

TABLE 121.—CHIEF COMPLAINTS OF RURAL PEOPLE AGAINST THEIR LOCAL GOVERNMENT, AS REPORTED BY CORRESPONDENTS<sup>18</sup>

Complaints	New England Towns	Township Areas	County Areas	Farmers	Officials	Teachers	Total
High taxes	6	44	51	27	68	6	101
Inefficient and extravagant system	7	46	37	41	36	13	90
Graft and corruption	0	29	31	20	31	9	60
Officials incompetent or ignorant	3	21	25	13	34	2	49
Poor roads built	1	32	13	14	28	4	46
Urban domination and exploitation of farmers	1	9	13	8	15		23
Laws not fully enforced		10	13	6	17		23
Favoritism to parts of area		12	5	6	9	2	17
State domination and interference	1	12		3	9	1	13
Does not meet rural needs	1	7	4	5	7		12
Too many elective officials		4	5	3	5	1	9
Taxes or assessments not equalized	2	3	2	5	2		7
Poor schools	1		4	1	4		5
Unit too small		3	1		4		4
No developmental program		2		1	1	1	3
No strong common interests in area			3		2	1	3
Tax burdens shifted or evaded		1	1	2			2
Government does not represent people		1	1		2		2
Personal liberty too much restricted			2		2		2
Salaries too small to secure real leaders			2		2		2
Petty grumbling and discontent only			2		1	1	2
Miscellaneous			2		2		2
No general complaints		5	8	6	7		13
Total*	6	120	110	41	189	6	236

\* Many correspondents mentioned two complaints, hence totals in this table exceed the number of schedules returned.

Galpin's suggestion of zones for a town-country type of municipality was mentioned in Chapter XXIII, and Table 122, which is somewhat along this line, appears in Manny's study under the heading, "Should a Town and Its Tributary Rural Trade Area Be Incorporated in a Single Municipality?" Manny's conclusions

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 128.

which bear most directly on needed adjustments in rural local government are as follows:

TABLE 122 —NUMBER OF CORRESPONDENTS FAVORING OR OPPOSING MUNICIPAL INCORPORATION OF RURAL LOCALITIES FOR GENERAL PURPOSES OF LOCAL SELF-GOVERNMENT, AND THE INCLUSION OF FARMERS' TRADE CENTERS AND SURROUNDING OPEN-COUNTRY TERRITORY WITHIN THE BOUNDS OF A SINGLE CONSOLIDATED RURAL MUNICIPALITY<sup>18</sup>

(Municipal incorporation of rural areas for general purposes)

	New Eng- land Towns	Town- ship Areas	County Areas	Farm- ers	Officials	Teach- ers	Total
Favoring municipal incor- poration of rural areas	4	91	78	53	97	83	173
Opposing municipal incor- poration of rural areas	21	132	131	76	196	10	284
Not specifying	5	24	27	25	31	—	56
Total	30	247	236	156	324	33	513

(Consolidated Municipality Consisting of Both a Trade Center and Surrounding Open-country Territory)

Favoring consolidated muni- cipality	15	79	84	44	116	18	178
Opposing consolidated muni- cipality	4	98	53	62	87	6	155
Not specifying	11	70	99	50	121	9	180
Total	30	247	236	156	324	33	513

If local government is to measure up to these assumptions in the best possible way, it would seem logical that units of local government should be devised so as to include groups of people whose other interests also unite rather than separate them—and that such units be sufficiently capable of expansion, contraction, or consolidation, as to land area covered or people included, that they will be able to keep abreast of modern trends of economic and social groupings and common interests. Furthermore, these units must be large enough to provide an adequate tax basis and "volume of business" for the services of local government to be performed within the area, but not so large as to lose all possibility of first-hand personal acquaintanceship between officials and citizens or between citizens and local governmental problems. Of course, the question of securing active

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid*, p. 141



participation by any considerable proportion of its populace is as yet largely unsolved by our great metropolitan centers, with their teeming thousands of people. However, that is a subject beyond the scope of the present study. Villages, small towns, and rural areas still have the possibility of encouraging personal participation and more active interest in affairs of local government, provided proper units are set up and machinery for stimulating citizenship cooperation is included in the plan. The present survey reveals only certain marked weaknesses of county-township government and suggests the formation of more suitable units.

The second major indication in the survey data is the rather prevalent conviction that farmers' trade towns and their tributary rural areas should be included in a single unit of local self-government; and that the varying needs of town and country, together with the whole problem of equitable taxation for all municipal purposes, merit the utmost consideration in any plans for reorganization. This would be indeed a great change, but one which can be met with adequate research, legislation, and subsequent directive (not repressive) supervision by state authorities.<sup>20</sup>

The high cost of local government is probably its greatest weakness, from the farmer's point of view, for its support costs him considerably more than does that of the federal and state governments combined. Local government is usually supported by property taxes, which have always been the heaviest item on the farmer's tax bill, and as a result the farmers, who have always been the staunchest advocates of local autonomy in government, are now demanding more and more state and federal aid for the support of schools and roads, and for health and welfare work. Harley L. Lutz names three conditions which contribute directly to the high cost of local government, viz., "mal-administration," "defective local governmental organization," and "lack of effective means of expenditure planning and control."<sup>21</sup>

**Tendencies toward Improving Rural Local Government.**—A movement for adjustments in rural local government is becoming fairly widespread, due probably to two reasons: (1) the improvement in transportation and communication facilities has eliminated the need for many local units formerly necessary when

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 150-151.

<sup>21</sup> Lutz, H. L., "Some Factors and Conditions Which Contribute to the High Cost of Local Government," *Abstracts of Papers Presented at the Fourteenth Annual Country Life Conference* (mimeograph), Cornell University, Ithaca, 1931.

horse-drawn vehicles were the only means of actual contact between rural people and government officials and agencies, and (2) the increasing cost of township, district, and county government has resulted in taxes which the farmer thinks excessive.

The first and most far-reaching adjustment can be made by what may be called broadly the "equalization fund practice." This principle is being followed not only in state education, but also in state health and welfare projects and in the state and federal aid given to road building. It has made such progress in North Carolina that both roads and schools were almost entirely state supported when, in 1931, laws were passed by the legislature which provided for the state to take over all public roads of whatsoever kind, and to assume complete financial support of the public schools.

The smaller units of rural government are tending more and more to give way to larger units of control. District school units are being absorbed in consolidated or township units, and county units of taxation, control, and supervision are growing rapidly in comparison with township units. In several cases state governments, by means of school equalization funds, the required certification of teachers, and state courses of study, are even determining the county's educational standards and policies. Road districts are gradually evolving from local and township to county and state systems. County and home demonstration agents, and health and public welfare officers are at least partially controlled by the directing state agencies. State laws are enacted for the control of pests, the elimination of bovine tuberculosis, the protection of game, and against the pollution of streams, they set the speed limits on state roads, and fulfill other similar purposes. The better facilities of transportation and communication are making larger units of control and supervision desirable and even necessary, and increased efficiency and better service usually accompany these larger units.

Certain tendencies to make local government conform to local community functions are also appearing. Douglass lists eight such specific tendencies:

1. Legislation permitting rural areas defined by community self-consciousness to incorporate for the performance of all essential civic functions, that is, to become municipal units doing essentially

all a town can do. Example: The North Carolina Rural Township Incorporation Law.

2. Legislation permitting the establishment of school districts, covering areas defined by community self-consciousness and irrespective of local political boundaries or previous educational units. Examples: The "community" high and consolidated schools of Illinois, similar laws in Kansas, Nebraska, and Washington; the rural agricultural school law of Michigan.

3. Legislation permitting or fostering the establishment of rural community councils, community centers, and buildings. Examples: The Michigan and Wisconsin laws.

4. Legislation providing means of overcoming the arbitrary limits of counties or minor local government units in the support of community governmental functions. Examples: School laws of Michigan, Arkansas, California.

5. Legislation implying a zone system of taxation for the support of different functions within a given community. Example: A great body of laws creating "special districts" of various sorts.

6. Legislation providing for cooperation between local governments and local voluntary agencies of civic importance. Example: Indiana (Chap 206, Acts of 1919). This provides that towns of 1000 or more people may "accept, maintain, operate, improve, or cooperate with private associations or individuals in maintaining, etc. auditoriums, recreation buildings, and grounds," and provides for levying a tax.

7. Legislation involving the identification of natural communities and their relationships, over larger contiguous areas. Examples: The Nebraska State Rural School Redistricting Law.

8. Legislation allowing options between a variety of local governmental agencies in carrying out community measures. Example: The Michigan Community Council Law.<sup>22</sup>

The universal increase in the reign of law, the entrance of the farm enterprise into the commercial world, and the rapid increase in the farmer's social contacts are making more essential an active participation, on his part, in political and governmental activities, as well as a more direct and prompt response to his economic and social needs on the part of the various governmental units which serve him.

In a paper read before the American Country Life Conference

<sup>22</sup> Douglass, H. P., "Recent Legislation Facilitating Rural Community Organization," *Proceedings, Third National Country Life Association*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1920, pp. 117-126.

in 1931, on the topic, "Can Local Self-Government Be Preserved in Our Rural Areas?" Paul Wager says that his answer is affirmative, provided political units are reconstructed, governmental functions redistributed, and local government processes made visible and constructive. In analyzing how these things can be accomplished, he calls attention to the fact that twenty-five states in the Union have never found any need for townships, while eleven others have never given them any important powers. He says .

In my opinion, the first step toward the revitalization of local self-government is to make the political unit conform, as near as possible, to the economic and social unit in which we live and transact our business. Outside of New England, the town, or township, has generally been an artificial thing without a center or any strong elements of cohesion. In many cases it is just 36 square miles of rural territory, only rarely has it developed into a conscious community. When roads were bad and six miles was a considerable distance, there was some justification for having road supervisors, overseers of the poor, and justices of the peace every few miles, but that need no longer exists. Moreover, under modern conditions, the township is not an efficient unit of administration for a single purpose of government. Already most of its officials have been shorn of their powers and duties to such an extent that their offices are empty titles and the salaries mere gratuities. The township should be abolished in the interest of the taxpayers, if for no other reason. Schuyler County, New York, the county in which I was reared, elects 64 county and township officers, the county in North Carolina in which I now live elects eight. This is exclusive of justices of the peace who are entirely too numerous in both states. The elimination of the township and the transfer of its few remaining functions to the county would (1) reduce the overhead expenses of local government, (2) establish a larger and more efficient unit of administration, (3) equalize the burden of taxation over a larger territory, (4) make for uniformity in the quality of governmental service, and (5) make government more responsive to popular control.<sup>28</sup>

Wager goes even farther in recommending the enlargement of counties, especially in the south. He cites the fact that Hamilton and James Counties, in Tennessee, have consolidated, that in Georgia, Dekolb and Campbell Counties have been annexed to Fulton County; and that county consolidation is being urged in

<sup>28</sup> *Proceedings, Fourteenth National Country Life Conference, 1931, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1932, p. 55.*

Texas, North Carolina, Kansas, Montana and New York. He goes into further detail:

There is much to be gained from a reduction in the number of counties in the South, and in some western states, where there are many counties that are too small and too poor in taxable resources to support comfortably an adequate program of public service.

Let me illustrate by indicating the kind of a consolidation program that I would like to see effected in North Carolina. The state now has 100 counties but it has only 50 or 60 cities and towns that show promise of growth. I do not mean mere growth in population, but rather towns that are trade centers and that can be expected to develop the service and cultural agencies to make them real county capitals. Many of these towns are already county seats but with trade territories extending beyond the county borders. On the other hand, several existing county seats are stagnant villages that can never become the kind of centers to assume the leadership and command the allegiance of the rural population. Any recasting of political boundaries in North Carolina, or any other state, should be preceded by a state-wide survey covering the distribution of population and wealth, population trends, topography, highways, trade areas, and particularly the character and vitality of the trade centers. In some instances the consolidation of two or more contiguous counties would probably produce a unit which approached the ideal which we have in mind. In other instances, some territory would need to be shifted from one county to another. Since the survey has not been made, I cannot say what the correct number of counties should be, but I would estimate ten fairly large counties with urban centers and possibly 30 smaller counties with village centers. The new counties would not be uniform in taxpaying ability, but inequalities would be less extreme than at present. And, even more important, each could be expected to develop a lively community consciousness.<sup>24</sup>

By the "redistribution of governmental functions," Wager has mainly in mind shifting the support and administration of these functions from a township and county basis to a state basis. The natural tendency in this direction was pointed out earlier in this chapter. An outstanding example of this occurred in North Carolina on July 1, 1931, when the state took over all the roads—54,000 miles; assumed complete financial responsibility for a compulsory school term of six months, and, in addition, took over all county convicts whose terms were as long as 60 days. This state

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, pp 56-57.

has for a number of years also contributed to the support of county welfare and county health work, and to that done by county farm and home demonstration agents; it has largely administered their finances and supervised their work from the state capital. The state also has an "Advisory Commission on County Government," headed by an executive secretary, which gives assistance to its various counties and towns in many ways, the influence of this body is apparent in safeguarding local bond issues and putting through state legislation on a sounder basis than "local bill courtesy"

By "making government processes visible and constructive," Wager means inviting the citizens to participate in the formulation of the programs of the various agencies in the county, mobilizing their interest for governmental-civic activities, and determining their own tax rates. He says, in this connection

When counties map out a five- or ten-year program of development in road building, or school consolidation, or highway beautification, or the stamping out of illiteracy, or any other constructive undertaking, and then month by month and year by year report their progress, a lively civic interest can be developed—even a wholesome competition between counties. Furthermore, the people must be invited to participate in the formulation of the program, each year's program. This can be done by having public hearings on the budget. The people should fix, in a measure, their own tax rate by deciding at what rate their program of development should advance. This is democracy. To elicit popular interest and participation, the objectives and achievements of government must be dramatized. An array of figures is not sufficient, they must be interpreted and illustrated. Any aspect of government can be dramatized if the officials have the art, and if they have the right conception of their responsibility. They must stop thinking of their offices as gifts of the people and think of them as stewardships. This will hardly be the case until administrative posts cease to be filled by popular election. The people should elect the policy-determining bodies, and they in turn should appoint the administrators and be held responsible for their actions. When the policies of local government are fixed by the people, and the execution of these policies is entrusted to trained administrators, we have established the basis for both efficient and democratic government. Not until that is done can we hope to see the largest possible fraction of the tax dollar translated into constructive achievements and a satisfied body of taxpayers. In other words, government must

be stripped of all secrecy, all mystery, all patronage; and its objectives must be definite, its processes visible, and its avenues of control easy and direct.

My answer, therefore, to the question given me is that local self-government in our rural areas not only *can* be, but *must* be preserved. We do not need as many political units as we now have, nor is it necessary that they be so small. But we do need a local unit of government embracing both urban and rural populations. I think that the county (sometimes reconstructed) offers the greatest promise of filling that need. It would be an evil day for American democracy if the rural population had no government nearer to it than the state government. The inhabitants of towns and cities have a chance for civic expression through their municipal government, but, if the county were abolished, the country people would be left in a political vacuum. They would be left without any political attachments and without any chance to gain political experience. The keen interest in public affairs that the rural population has always manifested, and the political leadership which it has produced are elements of our national political life which we cannot afford to sacrifice. Local self-government must be preserved because it is the very cornerstone of republican government.

It can be preserved (1) by reducing the number of political units and reconstructing those which we retain so that they will conform with natural economic units, (2) by transferring to the state those functions which are of state-wide concern and that cannot be supported locally either with adequacy or equity, (3) by making the local unit a nursery and testing ground for new experiments in government, or rather in the collective support of services which add to the enrichment of rural life, and (4) by making the objectives of government so constructive, the processes so visible, and the avenues of control so direct that the people will participate in its councils and take pride in its achievements <sup>25</sup>

Probably the best index of the growing concern about the weaknesses of "rural government" is in the fact that the American Country Life Association held its annual conference on this topic at Ithaca, New York, in 1931. Ex-Governor Frank O. Lowden of Illinois addressed the Conference on the topic, "The Problems of Rural Government," and Franklin D. Roosevelt, then Governor of New York, spoke on "A New Rural Planning." The *Proceedings* of this Conference contains articles by thirty authors, and

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 60

probably furnished the greatest body of facts and opinions ever assembled in a single document on the topic of "rural government."<sup>26</sup>

There is a growing agitation for the adoption, in county government, of what is generally called the "short ballot." Township supervisors, justices, and constables would be replaced by county officials—superintendents of public instruction, health officers, and superintendents of welfare—elected by the people rather than appointed by the various boards, as is now commonly the case. In some of the New England states superior court judges are appointed for life instead of being elected for a certain term of office, sheriffs are elected for a term of five years; and district attorneys, probate judges, and auditors are appointed by the governor of the state. In some of these states, and in California, coroners also are appointed. Other states are combining the functions of two or three officers in one office, and state supervision over many county functions is increasing.

If the above-mentioned tendencies, and many others too detailed for discussion, continue, as they undoubtedly will, the improvements in county government during the next decade will probably be as great as those in urban government twenty-five years ago when a movement for the improvement of city government occurred.

### QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

- 1 It is said that some state legislators once told a group of farmers to "go home and raise more hogs and less hell." What do you think of this attitude?
- 2 Why don't American farmers form an agrarian party and rule the country—or at least get what they want from state and national governments?
- 3 Are farmers conservative or radical in their politics?
- 4 Do you think the federal government should do more or less for our farmers than for other groups? Which policy is it following at present?
- 5 In what ways have farmers influenced governmental action most effectively?
- 6 What legislation do farmers need most at present?
- 7 What is the comparative importance of local, state, and national government to farmers?
8. In what international affairs, contingent on governmental action, do you think farmers should be interested?
- 9 What inefficiencies exist in the government of the county you live in?
- 10 What offices do you have the right to vote for? How many of them do you know anything about?

<sup>26</sup> This document came from press after the manuscript for this chapter was prepared. See *Proceedings, Fourteenth National Country Life Conference*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1932.



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## CHAPTER XXVIII

### LARGE FARMERS' ORGANIZATIONS IN THE UNITED STATES—A FARMER MOVEMENT

#### THE MEANING OF THE FARMER MOVEMENT

**The Farmer Movement More than a Series of "Green Risings."**<sup>1</sup>—Although there have been several uprisings among the farmers of the United States, they have been very different from the peasant revolts in Europe, for they have most often been represented by the formation of general farmers' organizations which have attempted to deal with maladjustments in the economic, social, and political status of agriculture and rural life. These farmer uprisings and organizations, when linked together, constitute a movement which has lasted continuously for seventy-five years. However, the farmers' movement in this country is more than the appearance of large national farmer organizations. It is true that these organizations are probably better indexes to its high and low tides than anything else which is known about generally; but the farmers' movement, as an attempt at the adjustment of their economic and social status, was incubating before any nation-wide farm organizations appeared, and it has been active at times and places when the overt influence of organized farmers has not been felt. However, its history can be told in terms of farmer uprisings and large farmer organizations.

The Granger movement of the 'seventies, the Alliance movement of the 'eighties and early 'nineties, the Farmer Union and the Equity movements of the first decade of the present century, the Non-Partisan League, and the Farmer-Labor movement of the last fifteen years, are usually regarded as sporadic uprisings of a considerable number of farmers who were discontented with

<sup>1</sup> G. K. Chesterton speaks of the post-World War peasant revolts in Europe as "green risings," to distinguish them from the "red risings," or the revolts of the proletariat. See also Bizzell, W. B., *The Green Rising*, The Macmillan Company, New York, 1926, pp. 3-4.

their economic situation at that particular time. It is not unusual to hear these uprisings spoken of with derision. We shall endeavor in this chapter to show that these organizations, together with a great many smaller and less well-known farmers' societies and several political uprisings of farmers, are all a part of one farmer movement.

The farmer movement goes back much farther than the organizations which have come into existence since the Civil War, for there were distinct rumblings of farm discontent long before the issuance of its first clear statement in the Centralia Platform of 1858 or the organization of the Grange in 1867. Even before the Revolution, the tobacco planters of Maryland and Virginia had attempted by an organized effort to influence price and control surplus by means of legislation.<sup>2</sup> Associations of farmers, mechanics, and workingmen began to spring up, and by 1834 they were scattered all over the east and as far west as Missouri. A national society was contemplated but never organized.

These activities on the part of American farmers were embryonic and sporadic; and although they were the natural and, in some respects, the genetic forerunners of the subsequent larger organizations, it was not until 1858 that the farmers' issues became distinct from those of the mechanics and workingmen, and it was ten years later before the farmers made their influence definitely felt through the Grange.

The farmers' platform, formulated in 1858 at a convention at Centralia, Illinois, which had been called to give concrete expression to a widespread discontent, became the battle cry of organized farmers. Although local farmer clubs and societies were then in existence in several states, no one of them had attempted to initiate a well-defined general movement. The Centralia Platform said, in part:

"We believe that the time has come when the producing classes should assert, not only their independence, but their supremacy, that non-producers cannot be relied upon as guarantees of fairness. . . .

"We believe that good prices are as necessary to farmers as good crops."<sup>3</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Gray, L. C., "The Market Surplus Problem of Colonial Tobacco," *William and Mary College Quarterly*, October, 1927.

<sup>3</sup> Periam, J., *The Groundswell*, E. Hannaford and Company, Cincinnati, 1874, pp. 204-206.

It then went on to set forth a plan for organizing the farmers in this country. The movement gained considerable strength and support, but it was interrupted by the Civil War, to be followed almost immediately afterward by numerous farmer clubs, and finally, in 1867, by the organization of the first great farmer society, the Grange.

From the issuance of the Centralia Platform until the present time, the farmer movement has centered about price and market

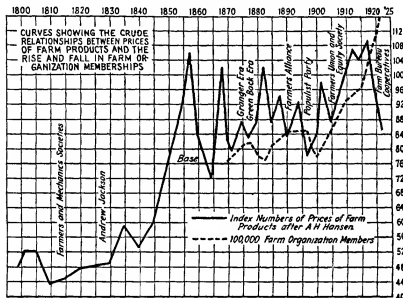


FIGURE 17—CURVES SHOWING THE CRUDE RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN PRICES OF FARM PRODUCTS AND THE RISE AND FALL IN FARM ORGANIZATION MEMBERSHIPS

problems. In fact, the history of the movement in this country could almost be written in terms of farm commodity price levels. The curve of farm organization membership in Figure 17 shows clearly that the dates of the troughs in membership are approximately the dates of the crests in prices, and *vice versa*. Prices and markets have been as much the center of the farmer movement as wages and hours have been for the labor movement; and, just as the latter is no longer spoken of solely in terms of strikes, so the farmer movement should not be spoken of solely in terms of farmer discontent or farm relief.

**What a Movement Is.**—A movement is a specific type of social phenomenon. It is a continuous and persistent attempt, on the part of a large group in a given society, to bring about an adjustment of economic or social factors or conditions which are, or are believed to be, maladjusted and hence detrimental to that group. A movement is more than likely to attack commonly accepted economic, social, or political arrangements and the accepted ways of thinking about them. The great majority of economic and social maladjustments are remedied piecemeal, if at all. If they affect only scattered individuals, they may be—and often are—disregarded; if they affect only a few who are highly localized, they are remedied by local community action; and if they affect a relatively small but widespread section of the population, or if they are of long standing, they are most often considered natural or inevitable. But when they are persistent and affect a large section of the population, they are usually attacked. In a dynamic and fairly democratic society they must be attacked, but even if the society is not democratic, some effort toward correcting them is likely to be made. In so-called static or autocratic societies the method of attack is open revolt or revolution, and in democratic societies it is a movement, this accounts for the fact that peasant revolts in Europe in the past have been bloody, while farm uprisings in this country have not.

The outstanding movements in this country have been on behalf of abolition, temperance, woman's rights, labor, and farmers. The first movement resulted in the abolition of slavery and the settlement of the political issues involved by the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments to the Constitution. The temperance movement attained its chief goal politically in the passing of the Eighteenth Amendment, and that for woman's rights, in the passing of the Nineteenth Amendment. The labor and farmer movements are the only ones whose objectives have not been enacted into law or been definitely crystallized in other forms of institutionalization. But these two movements still persist because the maladjustments which they are working to correct are complex and cannot be satisfactorily adjusted by so simple a remedy as a single legislative enactment or a constitutional amendment. Just as the labor movement arose out of the industrial revolution, so the farmers' movement arose out of the agricultural revolution,

i. e., the introduction and development of science and machinery in farming, and the advent of commercial agriculture.

The farmer movement took root early in this country because agriculture became commercial at an early time, but the agricultural revolution did not appear here in all of its phases until the 'fifties of the past century, and it came with a rush after the Civil War. The Granger movement followed closely upon the deflation of agricultural prices after the war.

Looked at in the light of the facts which will be given in this chapter, it should become apparent that the present discontent of the farmers represents something more than the propaganda of one or two militant farmer organizations. It is—and always has been—a concomitant of farm price depressions, but it is also a psycho-social phenomenon similar to the labor, temperance, and other movements that have been mentioned.

**How a Movement Operates.**—From the psychological point of view, a movement usually takes a long time to develop and gathers momentum slowly, but at its high tide it rushes with headlong fervor, sometimes with mob fury. The Grange, for example, moved slowly for four years and then suddenly seemed to catch fire. At the end of 1871, after two years of incubation and another two of actual propagation, it had 161 subordinate Granges, or community locals; in 1872 it added 1105,<sup>4</sup> in 1873 it added 8568 and, during the first three months in 1874, over 2000 a month.<sup>5</sup> The Alliance developed similarly, as did the Farmers' Union, the Non-Partisan League, the Farm Bureau, and several large cooperative marketing organizations.

Movements arise and crystallize somewhat like institutions and laws. The first stage is a fairly widespread discontent which finds expression in street, road, or cross-fence gossip or in other informal conversations. The second stage usually is initiated by some agency or organization already in existence, which stimulates discussion or sponsors speeches on the cause of the discontent. It was the churches in the temperance movement, clubs in the woman's rights movement, and in the farmer movement the country debating societies, the horse-thief protective associations, and a few other local community organizations, which fur-

<sup>4</sup> Kelly, O. H., *History of the Patrons of Husbandry*, J. A. Wagenseller, Philadelphia, 1875.

<sup>5</sup> Buck, S. J., *The Granger Movement*.

nished the media for the discussion stage of these movements. The third stage sees the creation of formally planned units for mobilizing members and influence, and for supplying a means for the propagation of the movement and its doctrines. In the fourth stage—or perhaps it is only supplementary to the third—pamphleteering, the publication of house organs, and books on the subject are likely to appear as the means of propagation, or even as propaganda. The final stage is that of legislative demands, the organization of lobbies, platforms, parties, referenda, etc., and a determined campaign to establish the proposed remedies by law.

The similarity or, in some cases, the identity of these five stages in the five movements mentioned can easily be seen. The farmer movement, like the other four, has followed the trend from incoherent discontent to demands for legal remedies. Space will not permit great detail, however, clear examples of this fact can be found in its activities during the three decades from 1870-1890, and also during 1920-1930. For example, the combined Farmers' Alliance movement, as will be seen later, started as a horse-thief protective association in Texas, a debating club in Arkansas, and a chance discussion in a country cemetery in Louisiana, and it grew with the same rapidity and by means of the same type of promotion as the Grange. It soon established its own national and state organizations, published a number of books, and began to make political demands at an early date, finally collapsing with the wreck of the Populist party and the free-silver campaign. At its peak it elicited greater faith and confidence than the Grange had during the period when it was controlling legislatures and electing governors and the judges of state supreme courts.

No movement can develop without the existence of some degree of class consciousness, and the labor movement is generally held to afford the most pronounced example of this. Class consciousness was clear-cut, but not universal, in the woman's rights movement, and it was present in a very subtle form in both the abolition and the temperance movements. As was said previously in another connection, American farmers have little class consciousness when compared with the farmers of some of the older countries, or even some Canadian provinces, but each farmer upheaval in this country increases this characteristic. Every large farmers' organization has its official publication and often many state organs; sometimes there are also county and township publications. Be-

sides this, there are the thousands of meetings which farm people attend regularly which are in and of themselves fuel for the slow flame of a rising class consciousness. The meetings held during the period of organization are generally highly propagandic, militant, and even inflammatory. The demands made by the organization upon candidates, legislatures and Congress are widely circulated and become known and sanctioned by thousands of farmers who are not even members of any farmer organization. Class consciousness has been pronounced and even violent during the high tides of the farmer movement, in fact, it is doubtful whether a movement could succeed at all if there were not these recurring high tides which build up class consciousness and stimulate group morale

Class conflict also is almost always a characteristic of a movement, for the highest degree of group homogeneity develops when certain class interests are opposed to other class interests. Thus the railroads were the butt of the Granger attack, the banks and the currency were singled out by the Alliance, the grain exchange and the railroads were the theme of the Non-Partisan League, and the tariff and price inequality are the center of the present discontent among farmers. Certain other attitudes have been exceedingly common in their repeated expression throughout the entire seventy years of the farmers' movement. "Monopoly" was the battle cry of all the farmer organizations during the past century, and "non-producing classes" has likewise been generally heard, "Wall Street" has been anathema, and government officials have been accused of playing into the hands of "speculators."

But above all, a movement develops on the basis of supporters who constitute a public. It is not the purpose of this chapter to develop a new theory of publics, or even to quote any of the several definitions of this word.<sup>6</sup> It will suffice merely to point out that the various occupational groupings of people provide a fertile soil in which to germinate a public; and the development of a group of common issues, or the appearance of what is considered a common enemy, serves to integrate into a public elements of a population which otherwise are relatively diverse.

The farmer movement, at its points of highest fervor or during its periods of greatest integration and homogeneity, is quite definitely a public in action, a public created by the common thinking

<sup>6</sup> See chap. vii for a short discussion of publics



which results from some degree of identity in occupational techniques and common problems. However, because the types of occupation in farming are more diverse than those represented in a trade union and because there is no group of farmer organizations which is comparable to the bureaucratic American Federation of Labor, the farmer public is highly integrated only at those times when practically every form of farming is suffering under a widespread economic depression, or when the issue of farm prosperity is definitely attacked by another occupational group. The four outstanding examples of clear-cut American farmer publics during the entire history of the movement are the Granger era evolving out of the post-Civil War adjustments, the Alliance and Populist era, following the deflation of the currency in 1873, the Non-Partisan League, organized to combat what to North Dakota farmers was a monopoly, and the whole group of farm organizations and legislative activities growing out of the post-World War adjustments and the present depression. In addition, the development of commercial agriculture to some degree has created a public which includes every type of farmer.

The farmers, during the periods of their greatest unity as a public, operate in accordance with the typical techniques of all publics. They move upon a minimum of analysis and a maximum of slogans and shibboleths. Songs, poems, symbols, trade marks, slogans, shibboleths and trite sayings are techniques of publics in general, and they have played their part in the operation of farmer publics. Many people of today remember the phrase, and even the song itself, which was current during the Populist period, "The farmer is the man who feeds them all"; and all of us are familiar with the slogan which was popular from 1921 to 1930, "Equality for Agriculture." The same motif runs through the movement from the Granger era of the 'seventies to the present, and weaves together the idea of these two slogans. Such techniques are especially valuable as a means of creating class consciousness and morale; and they have an even greater value as a means of interpreting the issues to the masses who are absolutely essential to the movement's successful development and continuance.

The principles and more important procedures apparently thus far developed by the farmers' movement are: (1) The movement is composed of farmers. (2) They are organized for action, and not merely for talk or protest. (3) They are developing or ac-

quiring the methods with which to work. (4) They are aware of a need which is long existent and which threatens to become permanent unless they satisfy it. (5) They are making systematic attempts to discover and analyze the fact and factors in their problems. (6) They are trying no new economic or political machinery, but rather are borrowing the machinery which has been well tested in these two major lines of social activity and has proved its ability to get results.<sup>7</sup>

#### LARGE FARMERS' ORGANIZATIONS AS AN INDEX TO THE FARMERS' MOVEMENT

**A Brief Survey of Large Farmers' Organizations in the United States.**—One of the most pertinent observations forced upon students of agriculture or agrarian organizations is that the large farmers' organizations of the present are not highly conscious of the fact that they are a part of a long series of such organizations. On the contrary, each of them for the most part assumes that it is starting a wholly new movement which will attack rural problems—in some cases, even new rural problems—in an entirely original way. Although these assumptions are partly true, in most cases they are false, for every farmers' organization which has attained national recognition is related in purpose to several others. Therefore, before describing and analyzing the large farmers' organizations of the present, it is desirable to make some broad generalizations which apply to practically all the large or national agrarian organizations.

As has been said, the present group of organizations is a part of the farmers' movement, the motif of which is the price problem which arose with the advent of commercial agriculture. However, by this we do not mean that all of them are marketing organizations, for some are, or were, political, and some are primarily fraternal and social. But notwithstanding this, each of them makes, or has made, an attempt—direct or indirect, conscious or unconscious—to influence the price and market regime into which agriculture has now fully entered.

A real understanding of the purpose, scope, and accomplishments of large farmers' organizations in this country cannot be

<sup>7</sup> Taylor, Carl C., "Organizing Farms for Economic and Political Action," *Proceedings, American Sociological Society*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1924.

secured by discussing the trials, errors, and success of a single such organization. For example, the Farmers' Alliance, the largest farmers' organization ever to appear in the United States, or probably even in the whole world, is not now in existence as such, although there is still a skeleton of an insignificant State Farmers' Alliance in North Carolina. The Grange waxed, waned, and then became great again. Although the Farmers' Union has lost nationally, it is gaining steadily in a few states. The American Society of Equity split into two organizations, one of which is still strong. The Non-Partisan League is practically extinct as an organization, but its influence is still definitely felt in certain sections. Other interesting fluctuations have occurred in some of the other organizations, but the *farmers' movement* has grown steadily, as will be clear from the following discussion.

*The Patrons of Husbandry (the Grange)* was organized in 1867 as a purely fraternal organization. However, it quickly drifted into economic and political activities—in fact, its existence was precarious and its growth slow until some of its state units adopted an economic program. During the early 'seventies it rushed headlong into political activities, in addition to its economic activities, and as a result its expansion was phenomenal. In 1868 only four subordinate (local) Granges, located in three states and with very few members, were in existence, but by 1875 there were 21,697 subordinate Granges in thirty-three states, with an estimated total membership of 858,050. The Grange finally entered every state in the Union, except Rhode Island. The trend of membership in the Grange, and in some of the other farmer organizations which will be discussed later, is shown in Figure 18.

At its height the Grange—or, more accurately, the Granges, for the national organization was active in almost none of the following activities—was running stores, operating buying clubs, maintaining state purchasing agents, operating some manufacturing plants, selling raw farm commodities cooperatively, and even operating a bank. It elected legislators, governors, and other officers in a few states, and was the dominant influence in half a dozen independent parties in as many states. In all of these activities it was striking, directly or indirectly, at price, market, and credit adjustments.

The Grange began to decline in 1876, apparently because of the

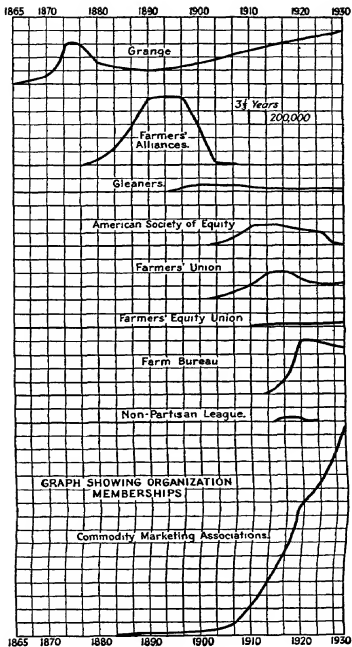


FIGURE 18—SHOWING ORGANIZATION MEMBERSHIPS

failure of its direct political activities, and also because the gains which had been expected from its economic enterprises were not forthcoming.<sup>8</sup> In addition, the state Granges suffered severely from the failure of some of their manufacturing enterprises. By 1889 the membership had dwindled to 106,782, but since 1890 it has steadily increased and today is probably greater than it was in 1875. After its decline the organization returned to its original purpose—fraternal, social, and educational—with a considerably enlarged program for accomplishing it, and today it is one of the largest farmers' organizations in the country. It is organized to cover all the social interests of rural people, and there are now also juvenile Granges. Thirty states or more are always represented in its annual national meeting; it has organizations in thirty-four of the forty-eight states, and it is constantly, although conservatively, organizing new territory. Its chief strongholds are New England, New York, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Michigan, and the far northwest. Its present membership is about 800,000, farm women always having been admitted to it, and there are 8000 local Granges.

The subordinate Grange is a local community fraternal organization whose programs cover anything and everything that concerns farming and rural life. Any three subordinate Granges may unite to form a Pomona Grange, which is generally a county Grange. A state Grange may be organized in any state in which there are fifteen subordinate Granges, and the Masters of the state Granges and their wives are always official delegates to the national Grange. The organization as a whole constitutes a national farm fraternity with seven degrees, the first four being given in the subordinate, the fifth in the Pomona, the sixth in the state, and the seventh in the national Grange.

*The Farmers' Alliance* was organized in 1878, but its roots can be traced back, here and there, to a still earlier period. The original organization, the Grand Alliance, was active chiefly in Texas. In 1882 the Alliance was reported to have 120 locals in that state. By 1887 it claimed 2800 sub-Alliances and a membership of 35,000. In 1887 it combined with the Louisiana Farmers' Union and, in 1888, with the Agricultural Wheel which had previously absorbed the Brothers of Freedom, a farmer-labor organization. The total membership of all these organizations was claimed to

<sup>8</sup> See Kelly, O. H., *op cit.*, and Buck, S., *The Granger Movement*.

be between one and two millions; and as a consolidation of these groups, the Farmers' Alliance became the largest single farmer organization known in the United States.

The Farmers' Alliance (Southern), although fraternal, was also avowedly an economic organization. It established an elaborate plan for both buying and selling, entered a number of manufacturing enterprises, attacked the credit problem by a definite organization, and claimed to have done millions of dollars' worth of business through its various economic enterprises. During the 'eighties it took up the political cudgels which the Grange had dropped and, in the sections where it was active, it exercised almost as great an influence as the Grange had during the previous decade. It finally drifted into the Populist party, which comprised the greatest political farmer uprising in our history.<sup>9</sup>

*The Agricultural Wheel* was organized in Arkansas in 1882, and by 1887 claimed 500,000 members. It absorbed the Brothers of Freedom in 1885, and united with the Farmers' Alliance in 1888.

*The Louisiana Farmers' Union* was organized in Louisiana in 1880 and reorganized in 1885, it united with the Farmers' Alliance in 1887. Its membership at that time is apparently not known.

*The National Alliance* (Northern) was organized in 1880. It spread chiefly in Iowa, Nebraska, and Minnesota, but had thousands of members in other neighboring states, by 1889 it was said to have 400,000 members. During that year an attempt was made to combine it and the Farmers' (Southern) Alliance. This was unsuccessful, although a number of members of the National Alliance (Northern) joined the other organization, and some of its state organizations sent delegates to the national meeting of the Farmers' (Southern) Alliance in 1890.

*The Farmers' Mutual Benefit Association* was organized in southern Illinois in 1882 and incorporated in 1887. At that time it claimed to have 15,000 members; by 1890 it had 1000 "branches" (locals) in Illinois, and claimed a membership of 200,000. Although it sent representatives to the meetings of the Farmers' (Southern) Alliance in 1888, 1889, and 1890, apparently it never considered that it had formed any organic union with this organization.

<sup>9</sup> The Populist and the Greenback parties were concomitants of the general farmers' movement, and were discussed in chap. xxvii.

*The Colored Farmers' Alliance and Cooperative Union* was organized in 1886. By 1890 it claimed a membership of 1,200,000, and had state organizations in Texas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, Florida, Georgia, South Carolina, North Carolina, Virginia, and Tennessee. It was at this time an amalgamation of colored Wheels and Alliances. In 1889 and 1890 it held its national meetings at the same time and place as the Farmers' (Southern) Alliance, and joined issues with this organization.

*The Ancient Order of Gleaners*, organized in Michigan in 1894, is primarily a fraternal association, with locals which are called "arbors." At one time it claimed 80,000 members, but it now claims about 45,000 in Michigan, Iowa, Illinois, and Ohio. Its chief economic activities are buying and selling, and providing farm market information service; it conducts a substantial insurance business, publishes a paper, the *Gleaner Forum*, and owns its own central building, the Gleaners' Temple, in Detroit. Its local and county organizations operate grain elevators and livestock shipping associations.

*The Farmers' Educational and Co-operative Union* was organized in Texas in 1902, and for several reasons grew very rapidly. The Grange had never been as strong in the south as in the north and middle west; but even where it had attained some strength in the south, it had been almost eliminated by the competition and activities of the Farmers' Alliance. By 1900 the latter had practically gone out of existence, but many of its former members joined the new organization. By the end of 1903, the Farmers' Union had spread into Arkansas, Georgia, Louisiana and Oklahoma; by 1905 it had organizations in eleven states and, in 1910, in twenty-seven. It reached its maximum membership in 1918 or 1919 when it had twenty-six state organizations and, in addition, locals in five other states.

In its early history the Farmers' Union never entered any state north of Kentucky or east of Indiana, for most of the north-eastern states were strong Grange states, and the Farmers' Union was looked upon as a radical organization. However, there is some evidence that a farmers' organization in Maine did establish working relations with some of the Union's business enterprises and paid dues one year to the national organization. Texas, Louisiana, and Arkansas were the first strongholds of the Farmers' Union, but by 1912 the center of strength had shifted to the

South Atlantic states, North Carolina having a larger membership in 1912 than any other state. Since 1913 the center has gradually been shifting to the middle west, and the Union's largest membership is now in Nebraska and Oklahoma.

The Farmers' Union was organized as a fraternal and educational association, but it quickly engaged in elaborate economic activities, operating grain elevators, mines, cotton and tobacco warehouses, cotton gins, livestock yards, packing houses, creameries, and cheese factories. It also organized fire, hail, and life insurance companies. Like all the other farmer organizations thus far discussed, it declared itself non-partisan. However, it has exercised considerable political influence, and in a few states political issues and activities have at times been its chief concern.

*The American Society of Equity* was organized in Indiana in 1902, its principles having been announced previously in some local farmers' clubs in southern Illinois. By 1906 it had spread into thirteen states, chiefly north and west of Indiana, although it was also active at that time in Kentucky, New York, and Oklahoma. The Equity differed slightly from other farmer organizations in that it laid greater emphasis on buying than on selling activities, and it was not a fraternal society. It was a purely business organization, and it has never been involved in politics. In 1908 it split, and the *Farmers' Society of Equity* was organized. After this, the original Society of Equity drifted somewhat more toward cooperative marketing activities. It has at one time or another had organizations in thirty states and has devoted itself to the various phases of the farmers' economic problems in the different sections of the country—to tobacco marketing in Kentucky and Wisconsin, to grain marketing in the northwest, and to livestock shipping associations in the middle west. In 1908 it organized the Equity Co-operative Exchange, which until 1915 was located at Saint Paul, Minnesota, for the purpose of securing profitable prices, distributing products, operating a crop-reporting service and storage plants, and offering protection against false grading, and from 1915 on this Exchange has been the heart of the organization. Since 1926 the Society has been taken over almost completely by the Farmers' Union.

*The Farmers' Equity Union* was organized in 1910, and like the Society of Equity is purely a business organization. It has no state or county organizations, and all of its local or centralized



organizations are business units which carry on marketing activities for their members. There are 156 local Equity Union exchanges located in ten different states, Ohio leading with 47. These exchanges both buy and sell for their members, but their chief concern is the operation of grain elevators, stores, and produce concerns. The national association, with headquarters at Greenville, Illinois, is the organizing and educational agency of the Equity Union. Membership in the national organization is purely voluntary and, in the locals, it is limited to the farmers who buy stock in the local Equity business enterprises. The total membership is about 25,000.

The purpose of the Equity Union is to eliminate marketing machinery as much as possible, returning to its members the savings thus effected. It usually pays a dividend of from only 3 to 5 per cent on the capital stock, subscribed by its members, preferring that they receive their greater gain from patronage dividends.

*The American Farm Bureau Federation* was organized in 1920 as a federation of state Farm Bureaus. The first local Bureau was organized in Broome County, New York, in 1911, and the first state Bureau, in 1915. An organization similar to that in Broome County was started in Pettis County, Missouri, at about the same time, both of these being sponsored by city chambers of commerce. However, the Farm Bureau had its real beginning in 1913 when, at a county-wide mass meeting, the farmers of Broome County took over the existing organization. In that year West Virginia required her farmers to join the Farm Bureau and pay a membership fee of \$1.00 before she would supply them with a county agent, and New York State made the same provision the following year.

The Smith-Lever Agricultural Extension Act of 1914 placed a great number of county agents in the field, and it is around them that the Farm Bureau has grown up, the middle-western and western states quite generally adopting it as the most effective organization through which these agents can work. In July, 1917, there were 542 county agents in these states, over 95 per cent of whom were working through or with Farm Bureaus, in 1919, when there were 1121 county agents in these states, 82 per cent of them were working through some such organization as the Farm Bureau. In the greater part of the south, however, the county

agents worked through farmers' clubs, county agricultural councils and other organizations, rather than through the Farm Bureau.

The Farm Bureau is a local association of rural people, the unit of membership being the family, and it attempts to include every phase of agriculture and rural life within the scope of its activities. In some states—Iowa, for example—there are local neighborhood clubs and also township, county, and state organizations, the latter being a member of the American Farm Bureau Federation. When it is worked out in this detail, the full scheme of organization and operation is as follows:

1. The local community or township Farm Bureau has its own officers, committees, and projects. This local Bureau often serves as a community social club as well as an agricultural production and economic organization.

2. The county Farm Bureau is both a "mass meeting" and a "delegate" organization. Its executive committee may be composed of the chairmen of the township locals, but the county Bureau has at least one general mass meeting each year which is open to all the members.

3. The state Farm Bureau is composed of delegates from the county Bureaus. It usually provides a number of specialized services to the county Bureaus and, in addition, holds an annual meeting in which anything connected with agriculture may be discussed.

4. The American Farm Bureau Federation consists of a board of trustees, one from each member state, and an additional trustee for every 20,000 members or major fraction thereof. It also has a house of delegates which is composed of one delegate from each member state, and an additional delegate for every 10,000 farms in the state. It receives an annual fee of fifty cents which is paid by each state Bureau for each of its members, thus a member of the Farm Bureau, by paying his county dues, automatically becomes a member of the entire organization. The total membership paying dues to the Federation through state organizations has been as high as 492,000 families.

The American Farm Bureau Federation has as its primary function making contacts between state Bureaus. However, in addition to its administrative department, it maintains six others: legislative, organization, research, finance, information, and trans-

portation. It also has a home and community committee which is in reality the women's division of the organization.

The *Non-Partisan League* arose in North Dakota in 1915, and six months later had 20,000 members in that state. It eventually spread into twelve other states and had a membership of 234,659, all of whom were farmers. Its purposes were purely political. It arose, however, because of economic conditions, developing primarily from the farmers' protest against bad marketing conditions. It gained control of the state government in North Dakota by persuading the farmers to vote for the candidates, on a non-partisan basis, who pledged their loyalty and support to the issues in which the farmers were interested. In 1917, as a result of its activities, the legislature of that state passed twelve laws which struck directly and drastically at conditions and agencies which the farmers had included in their program of reform; and in 1919, seventeen other similar laws were passed. Its success in North Dakota accounts for its spread into twelve other states, chiefly in the northwest, but it has now been practically eliminated as an organization because of the failure of some of its business projects, its seeming alliance with radical labor elements, and a concrete and well-organized fight which has been made against it.

The cumulative membership in farmer organizations from 1865 to 1930 is shown in Figure 19, and the accompanying table gives a good brief idea of the periods of activity of these various organizations.

Other organizations of a similar nature and purpose are the *Western Progressive Farmers* in the State of Washington, the *Farmer-Labor Union* in Texas, Arkansas, and Oklahoma, and the *Farmer-Labor Parties* in Minnesota and a few other states.

Several other more or less spasmodic farmer organizations have sprung up during the recent agricultural depression, chief among which are the price-fixing and commodity-holding associations represented by the *Iowa Corn Growers* and the *Cotton States Protective League*. How many of these organizations there are, or were, is difficult to say, but the writer knows of at least five whose memberships run into the thousands.

Other associations which are definitely related to the farmers' movement and which work through farmer organizations are the *International Farm Congress of America*; the *Farm Women's National Congress*; the *National Committee on Boys' and Girls' Club*

*Work, the American Country Life Association; the Jewish Agricultural Society, the National Council of Farmers' Co-operative Marketing Associations, and several others not so well known*

**Present Status of Large Farmers' Organizations: A Brief Résumé per Organization.**—The Grange is today the largest farmers' organization in the United States, having more members than at any time in its sixty-five years of continued existence

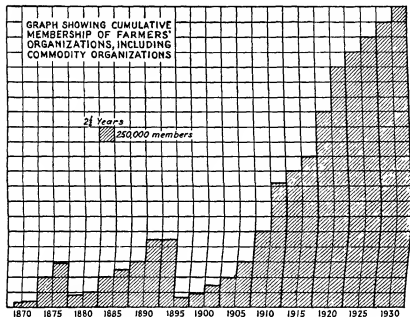


FIGURE 19.

The Farmers' Alliance and its associated organizations are no longer in existence

The Ancient Order of Gleaners, a fraternal and social organization which also functions on a commodity basis, is consistently following practically its original program

The Farmers' Union has lost many members in the south during the past ten years. However, it is active in Iowa, Nebraska, Oklahoma, Colorado and the northwest, where it is being of real service to farmers both in its purchase of consumption goods and operating products for thousands of farmers, and its successful

TABLE 123.—GENERAL FARMERS' ORGANIZATIONS REPRESENTED IN FARMERS' MOVEMENT, 1865-1931

1865-1875	1875-1885	1885-1895	1895-1905	1905-1915	1915-1925	1925-
Grange	Grange Texas Farmers' Alliance Arkansas Agricultural Wheel Louisiana Farmers' Union	Grange Farmers' Alliance (Southern)  Farmers' Mutual Benefit Ass'n Farmers' Alliance (Northern) Cleaners	Grange Farmers' Alliance (Southern)  Cleaners Farmers' Union American Society of Equity	Grange   Cleaners Farmers' Union American Society of Equity Farmers' Equity Union Farm Bureau (local)	Grange   Cleaners Farmers' Union American Society of Equity Farmers' Equity Union Farm Bureau (local, state and national) Non-Partisan League	Grange   Cleaners Farmers' Union  Farmers' Equity Union Farm Bureau

marketing of agricultural products in such central markets as Omaha, St. Joseph, Sioux City, Chicago, and elsewhere.

The American Society of Equity has followed several different courses. In Iowa, by mutual agreement on the part of the state officers of the two organizations, it and the Farmers' Society of Equity went over *en masse* to the Farmers' Union in 1924, and from 1926 on the Equities in Minnesota, Wisconsin, the Dakotas, and the northwest have been doing likewise.

The Farmers' Equity Union, which is making steady progress, has kept to one line of endeavor—operating locals and such centralized exchanges as are essential to the locals.

The Farm Bureau was organized to facilitate demonstration in production. From the first it has claimed that its primary purpose was to promote every aspect of rural life, social welfare, agricultural production, and economic organization and efficiency. However, as soon as it became state- and nation-wide, it began to exert an influence in economic and political fields. Locally it has consistently emphasized production and, in some states, a well-rounded community; nationally it has chiefly emphasized great economic issues and projects.

The Non-Partisan League and all the other farmer organizations whose aims have been avowedly political have more or less disintegrated. On the whole, however, their members, or former members, are with no small effect making their demands fairly clearly known. The Farmer-Labor party, the Farmer-Labor Union, the remnants of the Non-Partisan League, the Western Progressive Farmers, and the Farmers' Union undoubtedly made up a large proportion of the farmers who voted for the La Follette electors in the presidential campaign of 1924.

**Present Tendencies in the Farmers' Movement.**—Ever since its formal organization in the late 'sixties and early 'seventies, the farmers' movement has represented the farmers' attempt to fall in step with the market and price system which became the dominant factor in American agriculture with the advent of commercial farming. Regardless of its purpose or its creed, each farmer organization sooner or later has become concerned with the price, market, and credit problems and adjustments which confront farming today, and the expansion and growing membership of these organizations have been based on the faith that the modes

of attack proposed by them will bring some solution to these problems.

There are at present three definite trends in these large farmer organizations, the first and most marked of which is the drift toward cooperative marketing. For the time being—and, in some form, probably permanently—this is the answer to the issue which has been at stake in American farmer organizations for approximately seventy years.

The second trend is toward a crude and unconscious division of labor among the organizations themselves, and is the result both of the trials and errors in their attempts to perform almost every kind of function imaginable, and of competition. This division of labor takes three forms: that of fraternal and social activities, best illustrated by the Grange and the Gleaners, that of cooperative marketing, best illustrated by the Farm Bureau, although the American Society of Equity and the Farmers' Union are also examples to some extent; and that of purchasing, probably best illustrated by the Farmers' Union and the Farmers' Equity Union.

The third trend is the recognition, on the part of practically all of these organizations, of the fact that the social or community side of agriculture cannot be safely ignored. The Gleaners have never ignored it, and the Grange has been well aware of it for forty-five years. The Farmers' Union gives great emphasis to community and social activities in the states in which it is strongest, and the Farm Bureau is gradually realizing that its greatest loyalty and support are found chiefly in the states where it has been carrying on community work for some time, or is now developing it. Even cooperative marketing associations are finding it necessary, in the sections where there is no Farm Bureau or other national or state agricultural organization, to provide for social programs in their community locals.

#### COOPERATIVE MARKETING THE END PRODUCT OF THE FARMER MOVEMENT

**The Rise and Growth of Agricultural Cooperatives in the United States.**—The cooperative marketing of agricultural products in this country dates back to the attempt made by Virginia and Maryland farmers, as early as 1700, to control the

tobacco surplus. Its detailed development from that time until the present has never been adequately traced, nor are we here concerned with it. Our point is rather that cooperative marketing is a part, and in some respects the end product, of the farmers' movement in this country, and from this point of view its development must necessarily be surveyed briefly.

According to Hood, there are four periods in the history of agricultural cooperatives in this country, which he describes as follows:

The first period spanned several generations prior to the World War. Visioned cooperative pioneers formulated the principles and developed the practices which pointed the way for future development. Theirs was the work of trial and error, largely on a local scale. Closely knit community associations were laboratories wherein methods were tested, adjusted and made known to the agricultural industry.

The second period of cooperative development followed the war, reaching a climax in 1923 and 1924. In this period we find the first intensive promotion of large state and regional cooperatives. Stimulated by the post-war depression in agriculture and encouraged by enthusiastic promoters, farmers literally rushed into new associations . . .

Several salutary failures ended the pell-mell rush and ushered in a third period of cooperative development—one in which cooperative members and officials paused to take inventory of their accomplishments, to check up on their thinking, to perfect their operating methods and to study the new lessons they had learned about big business. It was a period in which gains were consolidated and unnecessary baggage thrown overboard.

The third period of development was abruptly ended by the passage of the Agricultural Marketing Act in June, 1929. It introduced the fourth period. The Act made it the policy of the Federal government to encourage the development of strong farmer-owned, farmer-controlled cooperatives for the purpose of promoting the effective merchandising of agricultural products. It provided for the Federal Farm Board, with a capable personnel, to administer the new government policy . . .

Since 1929 a great impetus has been given to cooperative activities, partly because of the Farm Boards' own activities but largely because its activities have focused public attention upon the subject. Farmers themselves have taken a renewed interest, while aid heretofore unknown is being rendered unstintingly by agricultural colleges, the



Extension Service, the Smith-Hughes system, and other public and semi-public agencies, as well as by the Farm Board.<sup>10</sup>

No authoritative information is available on the number of agricultural cooperatives in this country prior to 1915, although the dates of the founding of several well-known organizations, which have been in existence several decades, are known. Herman Steen considers that the earliest American agricultural cooperatives were the "cheese rings of Wisconsin and New England; the fruit associations of New Jersey and New York, the livestock shipping associations of Tennessee and Nebraska; the creameries of Massachusetts, and the grain elevators of Iowa and Nebraska, prior to the 'eighties. . . . American farmers first marketed cheese cooperatively in 1841."<sup>11</sup> Mears and Tobriner state that "The first cooperative milk establishment was formed in Boston in the early 'seventies."<sup>12</sup> The marketing activities of the Grange around that time have already been referred to.

The Pachappa Orange Growers' Association was organized at Riverside, California, in 1888, and the Southern California Fruit Exchange in 1895. Following these in the same state were the Mutual Orange Distributors in 1906, the Sun-Maid Raisin Growers in 1912; the California Walnut Growers in 1913, the California Peach and Fig Growers, the Poultry Producers, the Producers of Central California, Inc., and the California Lima Bean Growers in 1916; and the California Prune and Apricot Growers, Inc., in 1917.

In the meantime farmer cooperatives of some proportions were developing in other parts of the country. The Farmers' Cooperative Association, a grain elevator company, was organized at Cedar Bluff, Nebraska, in 1888, the Southern Produce Company, a potato exchange, was formed in eastern Virginia in 1902, in 1908 the Monmouth County Farmers' Exchange appeared in New Jersey, and the Erie County Growers Association in New York; in 1911 the Minnesota Cooperative Dairies Association was organized, and, in addition, several livestock shipping associations

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<sup>10</sup> Hood, Robin, "Cooperatives Are Marching On!," *Cooperative Marketing Journal*, September-October, 1931, pp. 164-165.

<sup>11</sup> Steen, Herman, *Cooperative Marketing The Golden Rule in Agriculture*, Doubleday, Doran & Company, Inc., New York, 1923, pp. 5, 156.

<sup>12</sup> Mears, E. G., and Tobriner, M. O., *Principles and Practices of Cooperative Marketing*, Ginn and Company, New York, 1926, p. 449.

in the North Central states<sup>13</sup> By 1915 there were 5424 farmers' business associations in the United States, with an estimated membership of 651,186, and an annual business of \$635,839,000 Since that time the growth of these cooperatives has been rapid and fairly steady. In 1925 there were 10,803 associations with an estimated membership of 2,700,000, and an annual business of \$2,400,000,000; and by 1930 there were 12,000 such agencies, with 3,100,000 members, and an annual business of \$2,500,000,000.<sup>14</sup>

From a questionnaire survey made during the summer of 1931, Hood calculated that, since the organization of the federal Farm Board in the summer of 1929, the membership of the 192 associations covered by the survey had increased 33.4 per cent, the business in dollars had increased 4.2 per cent, and the actual turnover in units of products had increased 28.8 per cent These figures do not include data on the 2600 associations which, according to Hood, were organized in 1929 and 1930, either directly by county agricultural agents or through their aid<sup>15</sup>

**Cooperative Marketing Sponsored by Farm Organizations.**—Agricultural cooperative marketing associations have been established by every farmer organization discussed in this chapter During the early days of the Grange, the Alliance, the Farmers' Union, and the Equity, cooperative buying was emphasized more than cooperative selling, and considerable but sporadic progress was made in establishing cooperative stores and in purchasing bulbs However, as each organization gained strength, the cooperative marketing of farm products became its most important project, and today the Grange, the Farm Bureau, and the Farmers' Union are the most outstanding and militant supporters of the agricultural cooperative movement in the United States. The Grange actually exported wheat in 1876, and the Farmers' Alliance exported cotton and operated tobacco warehouses The cooperative grain sales association organized by the American Society of Equity was, prior to 1920, the largest in the country, this Society was also especially prominent in the early livestock shipping movement, and it and the Farmers' Union sponsored the

<sup>13</sup> Steen, H., *op. cit.*

<sup>14</sup> *Yearbook of Agriculture, 1931*, United States Department of Agriculture, Washington, D. C., p. 1080

<sup>15</sup> Hood, Robin, *op. cit.*, p. 165.

earliest attempts at the cooperative marketing of tobacco. The Farmers' Union, which operated many cotton yards and sold this commodity to foreign countries, is now very successfully operating livestock commission agencies in our great central markets. The Farmers' Equity Union has been successful in marketing wheat and eggs; the Gleaners provided a rather extensive market information service during its early history; the Non-Partisan League owned and operated both local and terminal grain elevators, and the American Farm Bureau has sponsored some of our great wheat, livestock, dairy, fruit, and vegetable cooperatives. In addition to the support given these activities by the national organizations, a number of state and local branches have also sponsored local, county, and state marketing and shipping organizations.

It is thus apparent that these general farm organizations, with their educational and promotional programs, have played a large part in the development of cooperative attitudes throughout the world.<sup>16</sup> And we are probably justified in saying that, although these organizations cannot claim for themselves alone the honor of having developed cooperative marketing, and although they have not confined their activities solely to fostering this form of marketing, they have during the past twenty years accomplished to some degree the major objective of their common purpose—a partial adjustment to the market and price regime.

Light is thrown on the causes of the origin, growth, and decline of a specific movement by correlating its cycle with other cultural trends, such as those of the geographic, economic, political, religious and, possibly, the ethnic factors. There is both a similarity and a difference between movements, revolutions and revolts, their common object being the correction of what are generally considered widespread and continuing economic and social maladjustments. The difference between the peasant revolts of ancient and medieval times and the modern farmer movements can probably be explained in the terms of their different cultural *milieus*. A movement is the attempt, in a dynamic or so-called democratic society, to accomplish what, in a static or so-called autocratic and feudal society, could be gained only by revolt. Except for the night riders among the Kentucky tobacco growers, American

<sup>16</sup> Taylor, Carl C., "Rural Organization," *Encyclopedia of Social Sciences*.

farmers have attempted to correct their maladjustments peaceably, through organizations; and it is the combined history of these organizational activities which we have called the farmers' movement.

When we contemplate the differences between the extensive farmer with thousands of acres in small grain, and the intensive farmer with only a small truck plot, the foreign-born farmer of the Connecticut Valley and the native farmer of some parts of the south, the isolated ranchman, the mountaineer, and the semi-urban gardener, or the farm entrepreneur and the illiterate semi-slave cotton cropper, it is easy to understand why, after seventy-five years of organized efforts, the farmer movement is still little more than incipient.

If we consider the farmers' relatively few opportunities to participate in meetings of a parliamentary, debating, or group discussion type, it is apparent that a great contribution to the formation of farm publics is made by an increased emphasis on farm issues and the organization of various and numerous farmer associations whose meetings are conducted on a debating or discussion basis. Every farm organization which is based upon community or neighborhood locals encourages, and to some extent demands, individual participation, whereas almost all other farm assemblies have audiences which are merely listeners or spectators. Even in these latter at times—for example, when a membership drive is being conducted, although members are usually secured largely by propagandic methods—attendance at meetings is very large and the feeling of personal participation is intensified. Thus farm organizations are not only an index to the farmer movement, but also its generators and transmitters.

It is the advent of commercial agriculture and the forcing of the market and price regime upon practically every farmer that has given homogeneity and unity to the farm people of the United States. Thus something approaching the technique of a public has developed on the part of farmers, and by its means the farmer movement has developed and expanded, and the movement will continue to do so until the maladjustments in the market and price system, in the standard of living, and in social status are adjusted, or until the farmer loses the fight in his attempt to become once again an integral part of the culture and civilization to which he believes himself essential.

The recent marked progress of agricultural cooperative marketing, and the constant and steady increase in farm organization membership during the past thirty years, give promise that our farmers are making consistent headway in adjusting their enterprise to the demands made by the world-wide market and price system, and also put the recurrent uprisings of the farmers in a different light than that of a periodic revolt. Thus the facts presented in this chapter should make it apparent that these agrarian upheavals, considered in historic retrospect, constitute a fairly constant and steady farmer movement

### QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

- 1 Discuss fully the statement, "Large farmers' organizations have been rather futile"
- 2 What are your chief criticisms of large farmers' organizations in this country?
- 3 What do you consider they have accomplished?
- 4 How do you account for the long life of the Grange?
- 5 Do you think an organization with secret fraternal rites is better than one without such characteristics?
- 6 What is the relationship between large farmers' organizations and the local community movement?
- 7 Discuss the relationship of the farmers' movement and that for cooperative marketing.
- 8 Why has the Farmers' Alliance ceased to exist?
- 9 Do you think that farmer organizations should attempt to exercise any political influence?
- 10 What conclusions have you drawn regarding large farmer organizations?

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## CHAPTER XXIX

### THE FARMER AND CIVILIZATION

#### THE RÔLE OF AGRICULTURE IN CIVILIZATION

**Brief Summary of the Early Stages of Agriculture.**—The various stages in the evolution and development of agriculture were discussed at some length in Chapter II, and consequently we shall here only briefly summarize this material

It is estimated that the earliest man of whom we have any knowledge lived from 250,000 to 500,000 years ago. Many ages elapsed between his first appearance upon the earth and the time when he became a farmer, even in the broadest sense of the word. Apparently at least half of these hundreds of thousands of years went by before he domesticated either plants or animals, prior to which he could in no sense be considered a farmer, for even in its crudest form, agriculture came into existence only when man began to cultivate and nurture the plants and animals he had domesticated.<sup>1</sup> At first caves and other natural barriers against weather, climate, seasons and wild animals afforded him shelter, wild herbs, roots and berries, fish, insects and wild animals provided him with food. During this stage he was an open-country dweller. A few so-called aboriginal peoples are still living in what is sometimes called the "hunting and fishing stage"—or the stage of "direct appropriation"—of economic evolution.

Between that time and the present, agriculture has gone through many stages of development, and the division of labor in producing economic goods has become so specialized that many non-agricultural enterprises have arisen. Thus modern farming is the result of the previous stages of the development of agriculture, and it is conditioned by the other economic enterprises which have grown out or split off of it, or otherwise come into existence since farming began. Only in the light of these facts can the farmer's place in the civilization of the past or present be understood, and

<sup>1</sup> Gras, N. S. B., *op. cit.*, chap. 1

his possible place in the civilization of the future be speculated upon. The following few broad generalizations regarding agriculture in the past are offered in order to make possible an understanding of its present status.

1. More and better methods of agricultural production have been discovered or developed, and these have made it possible to provide for an increasing number of people.

2. The greater surpluses of food, clothing and shelter supplies produced by farmers have resulted in higher standards of living for all the consumers of these goods.

3. The increased leisure resulting from this surplus production has made possible the development of art, literature, recreation, and, to some extent, science.

4. As the result of the development of the refining—or handicraft and manufacturing—processes, many people and many industries which were formerly located in the open country are now located in cities.

5. The farmer of today is a specialist in the production of raw materials alone, everyone being dependent upon him for these products and he in turn depending upon others for practically all the refined goods he needs.

If these generalizations are accepted as valid, it will be evident that the farmer of today has a different place in civilization than was his in the past. His present and future problems and his present and future place in civilization depend upon the economic and social adjustments necessitated by his new position in a society which is far more complex and interdependent than has ever hitherto been the case.

**Modern Agriculture.**—In the past, farming was only an occupation, but modern agriculture is a business enterprise. As an occupation it considers only the processes by which farmers raise crops and livestock, as a business enterprise it takes into consideration the cost and income equations inherent in a society organized and operated on the basis of a price and market system. In other words, as a business enterprise, farming retains all its problems as an occupation and in addition has to assume price and marketing problems.

Until about four centuries ago, farming was carried on throughout the world as a family enterprise, crops being planted, cultivated, harvested, and consumed by the individual farm family.



Thus the farmer's chief task was to make the soil produce each year a sufficient quantity and diversity of products to supply his family with consumption goods for one year's time. Since the family's supply of these goods was limited to those which could be grown and manufactured on its own premises, the range of its standard of living was extremely restricted.

The Industrial Revolution and the development of trade and commerce have had drastic and far-reaching effects upon agriculture. Handicrafts were first developed on the farm and were the natural result of the universal effort to make the raw materials of the earth of greater use to mankind. The inventions which ushered in the Industrial Revolution made it possible to apply water and motor power in refining raw products, and as a result the refining processes became concentrated at or near the source of power. The development of trade and commerce brought with it an expansion in the range of the farm family's consumption goods. It also made possible a geographic division of labor in the production of farm products, for farmers could produce the goods for which they had the greatest comparative physical and economic advantages, sell their products in world markets, and with the money received buy any and every type of goods produced anywhere in the world. All these changes made trade and commerce essential, and a new economic organization of society came into existence. The effect on agriculture was even more pronounced than the introduction of motor power had been on the refining processes. Farmers no longer found themselves confronted only with the necessity of producing enough food, clothing, and shelter supplies for their own needs; they now had to supply raw agricultural materials for a population, one-half of which lived in cities and produced no raw materials. Furthermore, they saw opportunities to specialize in the production of raw materials and purchase all their refined goods from those specializing in manufacturing processes.

Farming as a self-sufficient enterprise persisted in the middle west of the United States until about fifty years ago, and is still found to some extent in some of the isolated mountain districts. In the main, however, agriculture has made the change from a self-sustaining industry to a commercial enterprise.

Agriculture, however, is even more than an occupation or a business enterprise, for it is a mode of life. The farmer measures the occupation and science of farming, and its economic problems,

in terms of the standard of living of open-country people, for this, after all, is the real social test of agriculture and the aspect of greatest concern to the people who farm.

Men do not farm merely to produce the raw materials which society needs, nor do they farm solely for the money they can make. Farming existed for centuries before price and money became the standards of measuring the value of goods. The farmers of those early periods produced goods for home consumption, and measured agriculture in terms of the standard of living made possible by it and by their physical and social environment in general. As a division of labor and a system of exchange slowly but surely developed, agriculture became interdependent with other occupations, its products being exchanged for the goods and services furnished by other great divisions, or occupational groups, of society. Farmers produced for a market and purchased from a market, the measure of exchange in which was price, wherefore the prices of farm products and the economic income from farming became the measures of agricultural efficiency.

The change from producing for home consumption to producing for a market did not alter the fundamental purpose of farm production, for it is today—as it has always been—to secure the greatest satisfactions possible for those living and working on the farm. In the last analysis, the farmer still measures his work in the terms of the satisfactions it yields him, and he is justified in expecting others to measure it by the same criterion.

There are, then, three aspects to farming: an occupation, a business enterprise, and a mode of life. The farmer's task, in a society organized on a price and market basis, is to convert his occupation—producing raw materials—into economic dividends, and to convert the latter into a satisfactory standard of living for himself and his family.

### THE FARMER IN A COMMERCIAL WORLD

**Farming a Commercial Enterprise.**—Society today is organized on the basis of its commerce more definitely and more widely than on any other basis. Because farming existed so long before commerce developed, it has yielded slowly to the commercial regime, but the transfer must be—and is gradually being—made. The two most important adjustments which the farmer of today must make are to the physical elements, such as the soil and

climate, and to the markets in which his products are sold. To be successful, the modern farmer must be both scientist and business man

Every known method and achievement of exact and practical farm science is laid at the farmer's feet in order to assist him in making his adjustments to the physical elements and to give him the latest information and techniques in raising plants and animals; literally thousands of well-trained specialists serve him in this phase of his work. But until very recently he has been left to flounder by himself in his adjustments to the stern and complex conditions and processes of the commercial world into which he has been thrown.

**The Farmer's Commercial World.**—What sort of adjustments must the farmer make to the commercial regime? What must he know? How can he get in step with it? It is a world of prices and markets, an economic system in which dividends are declared on every division of society's labor. The adjustments he must make are those which are concerned with costs of production, with his bargaining power in world markets, and with the financial returns on economic achievement. He must know how market prices are made, and he must put himself into a position, both physically and intellectually, to help make them, for, failing this, he will fail in everything else through which he becomes a successful farmer.

If we were still living in the day when the farm family derived practically its entire standard of living from its own fields and flocks and herds, then the farmer's adjustments would be complete when he learned to raise "two blades of grass where one previously grew." Although some men can still remember that day, it has now passed for them and for every other farmer. The farmer of today purchases a considerable part of his standard of living from other parts of the world, and what he buys, and therefore largely what he has, depends on the price he receives from the sale of his own raw materials in world markets. He demands—and is entitled to—the hundreds of things which have only recently become a part of our general middle-class standard of living; but besides these, he must also purchase clothes, tools, furniture, flour, and the countless other things which were once produced on the farm but which, under specialization and the division of labor, are now made in the city.

The farmer's standard of living is lower than that enjoyed by other people in certain other occupations, and he wants more dividends with which to fill in this gap in his own standard of living. Knowing that these dividends are declared in the market place, he seeks to make the necessary adjustments to the commercial world, the heart of which is the market.

His failure to make these adjustments, in spite of having been living under this economic regime for two generations—and, in some parts of the United States, for seven—is due to the facts that he is a creature of custom and his occupational technique is traditional to a greater extent than is the case with any other entrepreneur; he has been regarded only as a tiller of the soil; and, above all, his trained leaders have been so deeply concerned with the technical aspects of the farming process that they have taught him to feed the world more successfully than to provide for his own family and community and to help build a well-rounded rural civilization.

**The Farmers' Attempts to Meet the Tests of the Commercial Regime.**—We must not think that the American farmer has failed to recognize either his changed status or the need for adjustments on his part, for he has for some time been making his economic demands heard in no uncertain terms. As we saw in the preceding chapter, immediately after the Civil War he made his first outstanding attempt to adjust himself to the commercial regime which was then entering American life in full swing, and the Granger uprising was but the beginning of a farmers' movement which has grown ever since. Farmers of today are almost universally organized in some way for economic action, and the day is rapidly approaching when the majority of American farmers will belong to one or more of these economic organizations.

Farmers work continually under economic handicaps, which at times—the post-Civil War period, the panic of 1873, and the post-World War period, for example—become greatly intensified, and it is at times like these that they organize for specific economic action. Each new farmer movement has had a greater magnitude, a wider range of activities, and greater achievements, than any previous one, due to the fact that, in addition to having the experience of previous ones to guide it, it is composed of an ever more intelligent farm population. It is probable that this experience has been sufficiently wide and varied and that the farm

population is now sufficiently intelligent for the present group of farmer economic organizations, or an immediately succeeding group, to become a permanent part of the nation's economic machinery.

Two generations ago farmers belonged to no organizations except the major social institutions and the traditional political parties, and one generation ago only a few of the more radical belonged to the Wheel, the Alliance, or similar organizations, but today the majority of farmers belong to one or more such organizations. These associations are local, county, state, and national, official and unofficial, and supported by subscription, fees, and taxation. But they are part of an agrarian movement—a movement that has inevitably arisen because the farmer realizes that he is performing an essential and definite part of society's labor; because the development of industrial methods, especially in transportation, has converted farming into a commercial enterprise and thrown the farmer into a price and market regime, because the farmer is no longer isolated and he consequently realizes that other sections of the population are more prosperous and more polished than he is, and, finally, because he has seen other groups, especially those with more or less common economic interests, gain the desired ends most quickly through organized economic action. These are the natural products of social evolution in western civilization, and they are part of our developing social organization.

**Methods of Adjustment to the Modern Economic Regime.**—The farmer of today cannot withdraw from the economic regime of the present, for he lives and works in a world universally organized on the basis of prices and markets. The economic and social advantages of this, both to him and to others, are obvious. But the farmer must enter this commercial world fully, and so far his progress in this direction has been made without either the economic knowledge or the economic organization to enable him to cope with its problems. It is therefore evident that he can be helped in his adjustments to it if he is provided with this knowledge and organization; and every agency, voluntary or official, which seeks to make him efficient and successful in his work must train him in this knowledge and organization.

All these agencies are beginning to attack the farmer's commercial problems to some extent, and most of them are proud of

their beginning. However, it is to be questioned whether this pride would be justified if an honest and intelligent comparison were made of their emphasis on these problems and on some other farm problems; for both the farmer himself and the farm boy in college are receiving from ten to twenty-five times as much instruction in soils, physical production, and plant and animal diseases as in costs, prices, credits, markets, and economic and social organization. The farmer's most important and most difficult problems today are those arising from his commercial relationships, they are more complex than any arising from the technical phases of production, and they are more difficult to analyze and understand. Furthermore, the farmer is less likely to gain an adequate knowledge and understanding of them under the apprenticeship method. He must therefore have direct training in this field. These problems are so important and so pressing—and this has been true for a generation—that the agencies providing for agricultural training and leadership should devote fully one-half their time, money, and energy to helping the farmer make an intelligent and successful adjustment to the price and market system.

The farmers of the world are not producing a greater quantity of raw materials than can be consumed; but, to the extent that they fail to collect the economic dividends on their work and consequently do not have the money necessary to purchase an adequate and up-to-date standard of living and to build a well-rounded rural civilization, they are violating almost every law of business—or at least failing to follow these laws. Furthermore, the leaders in rural life are still largely in a rut, for they are teaching farmers how to produce greater quantities and neglecting the question of the financial return on what the farmers do, can, and will, produce.<sup>2</sup>

Farmers have tried many methods of gaining their economic ends, they have resorted to night riding, and they have tried to eliminate many legitimate business enterprises. They have sought to alter major economic processes and organizations by legislation or mere protest; in their attempts to raise prices they have urged cheap money and legislated for dollar wheat and ten-cent cotton. They have attempted to organize a political party, but failed because party allegiance in this country is too indirect and intangible

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<sup>2</sup> This was written before the "Domestic Allotment" farm relief plan, for grappling with the farmer's economic problems, was proposed.

to guarantee a continuous, unwavering loyalty on the part of our farmers. But notwithstanding all these efforts—in fact, partly because of them—the farmers have now arrived at a stage of thought and action where they are ready and anxious to learn if the teachers can be secured.

If the farmers of today cannot make their economic adjustments by means of the development and diffusion of price and marketing information, they will use more revolutionary methods—a third party, farmer revolts, and the open conflicts which have characterized adjustments in the labor field. But it would be even more tragic if these adjustments were not made by one method or another, for rural civilization in America would be inadequate and not worth while.

#### THE FUTURE OF AMERICAN RURAL LIFE

**Two Great Possibilities.**—Rural civilization in this country either can become unique, or it can follow the path of almost every other such civilization. Rural life lags behind other more advanced civilizations throughout the world and, in culture and standards of living, behind the urban civilization in most countries. The landed aristocracies still in existence are largely composed of absentee landlords; and where ownership is still retained by the tillers of the soil, there is a peasant civilization. It is only in the younger countries—the United States, Canada, Australia, and South America—that farm operators approach either the financial or social status of the more prosperous classes of society, however, in the United States the trend is undeniably away from this direction. It is true that the men and women who were born on American farms a generation or two ago have risen in the financial and social scale, but few of them have achieved this by remaining on the farm, they have left it to follow other professions which have taken them to the city. When millions of people pick up "root and branch," and leave the environment in which they were born and reared, it cannot be denied that stern forces are at work which threaten serious consequences unless drastic action is taken. Nor should we lose sight of the fact that these forces are likewise dangerous for those who remain on the farms.

Hundreds of thousands of young people who are just starting to make their own way in the world choose the city as the field of their greatest opportunity. The fact that there is a conscious

choice in almost all these cases gives some indication of the type of people the rural districts are losing, for slow-minded people do not take up new enterprises quickly, preferring rather to remain on the farm where the tasks of life are learned by apprenticeship and assimilation. The man who never arrives at the stage of analyzing and comparing his own economic and social outlook with that of other people is likely to be the very man who perpetuates traditional farming methods, who struggles against putting his farm enterprise on a scientific and business basis, and who accepts without protest a low standard of living. Those who are most alert, who read most widely, who seek a cultural and business education, and who definitely want to get on in the world are the very ones who not only know about the better financial opportunities in other enterprises but who also have sufficient self-confidence to volunteer for the financial battle. Those who refuse to put up with poor schools, poor churches, poor homes, little recreation, and few social contacts in the country are entirely too often the ones who fight for these things in the city whither they have gone, those who make no protest against these conditions remain on the farms and lower the level of rural life.

If all the men with brains and initiative who were born and reared on American farms but who are now successful leaders of industry in the cities were to be turned back to the farms, some of the conditions to be mentioned shortly would come to pass in less than half a generation. This, however, must not be construed to mean that only men with the highest intelligence have left the country, for the best evidence indicates that the migrants from country to city include for the most part those at the top and bottom of the ladder of agricultural success.<sup>8</sup>

**Agricultural Efficiency and Rural Welfare.**—In a well-organized social order the problems of agricultural efficiency and rural welfare should be two aspects of the same problem, and some means should be discovered whereby the benefits accruing from an increased efficiency in agriculture could be liberally reflected in the well-being of those responsible for the economic gain. This, however, has not been true of American agriculture to any considerable degree.

The increase in the farmer's own efficiency, due to the intro-

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<sup>8</sup> Zimmerman, C. C., "The Migration to Towns and Cities," *American Journal of Sociology*, 1927, no. 1, pp. 105-109, no. 3, pp. 450-555.



duction of science and machinery during the past century, has been marked, and has made possible the production of a much greater quantity of farm produce with almost no increase in the farm labor force.<sup>4</sup> The result has been that, although agricultural efficiency has steadily increased, the percentage of the national population engaged in farming has steadily decreased.<sup>5</sup>

The annual volume of farm production in the United States is greater than ever before, and our farmers are producing more per capita than any farm population in the world, and more per acre than any American farmers have ever produced. With a greater gross, per capita, and per acre production, it is indeed strange that the farmer's material standard of living should be consistently and perpetually below the entrepreneur class of the city. Some students of farm conditions argue that the solution to this is to allow farm production to lag until the world cries for food, and cries in terms of higher prices,<sup>6</sup> indeed, if our present price system operated by divine fiat, no other solution would be possible. But this is not the case, and therefore we are justified in seeking other solutions.

The farmer's task, so far as society at large is concerned, is to grow raw materials to feed and clothe the world—at present there are none too many farmers if this is to be done adequately. From his own point of view, his task is to feed, clothe and shelter his own family and, in addition, to guarantee them opportunities for health, education, recreation, and community life. To do this he must secure a greater financial return from the markets in which he sells his raw materials. This dilemma does not resolve itself into the question of whether he is to starve himself a little in order that others may live, or whether others are to starve a little in order that he may live. It is a problem of the price system and the economic and social theories arising from this system.

American farmers must, by economic education and economic organization, put themselves in a position to know the "mysteries of the pecuniary calculus" as well as those of soil and seed, and

<sup>4</sup> See chap. v.

<sup>5</sup> The United States Department of Agriculture estimates that the 1932 rural population is the greatest in the history of the nation, but it also estimates that the drift back to the farm has slackened (April, 1933).

<sup>6</sup> East, E. M., *Mankind at the Crossroads*, chaps. iv, vi, Thompson, W. S., *Population: A Study in Malthusianism*, Columbia University Press, New York, 1915.

to reap the same kind of rewards that corporate business enterprises have gained by means of a consciously organized economic power and increased economic enlightenment. This is no easy task, for it involves introducing and inculcating big business methods into agriculture—a task which, in urban industries, has been accomplished by a slow accumulation of knowledge which began with the rise of trade and commerce and developed rapidly in these enterprises following the Industrial Revolution. This knowledge will develop slowly in the field of agriculture for two reasons: (1) because agricultural production becomes organized on a large scale only in the marketing stage, and (2) because the trained leaders in agriculture have so long emphasized its technical aspects and neglected its economic and commercial phases. But until this task is accomplished, no one is justified in asserting that the present low farm income is a sign that 10 per cent—or any other percentage—of our farmers should leave their farms and cease to produce some of the prime necessities of life, becoming instead the hired laborers of the money makers of the world.

As agricultural efficiency increases and a greater volume of raw materials is produced with fewer men, our farmers must choose among three possible ultimate ways of using the gains of their increased capacity: (1) To put this gain in land in anticipation of higher values, (2) to use it in aiding the improvement of urban life, or (3) to find the knowledge and power whereby it can be converted into a higher rural standard of living.

Because of two centuries of exceptional land opportunities, there has developed in this country what might be called a "land speculation complex." American farmers have believed traditionally that some day they would all own farms and that land values would inevitably continue to rise indefinitely, and because of this faith, land has absorbed a large proportion of agriculture's economic gains. There has also developed in this country what might be called an "urban complex" which causes practically everyone who seeks culture, leisure-time pursuits and other social desiderata to drift cityward. As the result of the belief that urban life is and must be better—or at least more satisfactory—than country life, many of agriculture's economic gains bear fruit in comparatively high urban standards of living at the expense of the rural standard.

Whether American rural life will develop a peasant—or even

a tenant and hired-man—civilization depends on whether we develop a "rural life complex" which will see that the rural standard of living receives the benefits arising from agriculture's economic gains. Three things are necessary in this complex: a knowledge of the fact (1) that prices and financial income are the products of the economic and social organization, (2) that if the economic returns can be assured, rural life can be made more wholesome, more creative and more satisfying than urban life, and (3) that there are other techniques of life than those of work and money making that must be learned before a more creative and satisfying life can be had.

**The Tests of Rural Progress.**—To most people progress is a vague thing, and no attempt will be made here to define it in absolute terms. What we shall do is to discuss a few of the criteria which are generally accepted as measures of modern social progress, and apply them to American rural life.

In Chapters VIII and IX on the rural standard of living, the following eight factors were given as standards for measuring human satisfactions: food, clothing, housing, health, education, religion, recreation, and social contacts, the first four pertaining primarily to physical, and the last four to cultural, satisfactions. Rightly or wrongly, society has come to accept these as criteria of social efficiency. Although, measured by any one or all of these criteria, rural society has advanced, it has lagged when compared to urban society, the lag being most pronounced in the cultural facilities and attainments. Wisely or not, we have come to use these cultural criteria rather than the physical in measuring social efficiency. But it is not enough to show an improvement over previous standards of living; rural society is a part of civilization, and if its gains in social well-being do not keep pace with those of other sections of the population, it is relatively losing ground.

The achievements of socialization, discussed in Chapter X, are also quite widely accepted as measures of progress, for it is by the process of socialization that the individual personality is developed and community life achieved. We live largely by means of, and for the purpose of, association, for the greatest pleasures are derived from human contacts. Even though modern methods of communication have greatly mitigated the dire isolation of pioneer rural life, here again, when compared with the city dweller, the rural individual is continuously handicapped for, with

the exception of the family, he has comparatively few institutional associations. Communication by means of social gatherings, public meetings, the press, the telephone and business contacts is restricted in comparison with that in the city; community life, in terms of the playground and neighborhood, is meager, and, as Cooley says, these "primary associations are fundamental in forming the social nature and ideals of the individual."<sup>7</sup> The fusion of personalities, which he describes as the essence of human nature, has probably been sacrificed to a great extent in city life because of its impersonal nature, but it has been sacrificed to an even greater extent in rural life by the breaking up of the face-to-face associations which formerly constituted neighborhood life, and the failure to replace them by any other face-to-face associations. To quote Cooley again, "Life in the primary (face-to-face) groups gives rise to social ideals which, as they spring from similar experiences, have much in common throughout the human race. And these naturally become the motive and test of social progress"<sup>8</sup> Out of them we get our notions of love, freedom, and justice, which we are ever applying to life and social institutions

Although in the three primary associations listed by Cooley—the family, the playground, and the neighborhood—the rural community has some advantage over the city community because of its more stable family life, it is at a disadvantage because of its poorer neighborhood life. If it is to enjoy the benefits of playground and neighborhood associations, the obvious thing is to provide the facilities which will supply them.

As civilization has advanced, leisure has increased, but rural life has secured its share of neither the leisure nor the facilities for its constructive use. Our idealization of urban life has led us largely to ignore the open country as a place for leisure. In many ways the increase and development of leisure plays a part in promoting cultural achievements equal to that played by the development of an economic surplus, for from leisure have come art, literature, and science. This, rather than any superior ability, probably explains why so many more of the people accomplished in these cultural endeavors have come from the urban, rather than the rural, population. The country with its open spaces, its living things, its natural beauties and its opportunities for contemplation

<sup>7</sup> Cooley, C. H., *op cit*, p. 23

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid*, p. 32

and meditation, should afford a rich environment for cultural achievements if it can liberate its people from the deadening fatigue of farm work, offer escape from the threat of poverty, put itself in contact with the socialization process, and become convinced of its superior innate advantages for the constructive use of leisure time.

Neither institutions nor civilization is entirely dependent on the influence of great men, but rural progress depends to a large extent upon leadership, and the whole system of agriculture and rural life has in the past developed few leaders. Little statesmanship has been dedicated to the cause of rural life. Although great leaders have been born, reared and partially educated in the country, few of them have remained there or dedicated themselves to the task of upbuilding rural civilization.

Gillette names the "prime requisites of a productive rural leadership" as "the power of initiative, organizing ability, sympathy with human aims, trained intelligence, and vision and outlook"<sup>9</sup> With these in mind, let us try to understand why rural life has not been active in developing and holding leaders. The individual enterprise of farming, the isolation, and the fact that the children help with farm work at an early age, develop a high degree of initiative in the average farm-reared man or woman, but this is about the only leadership requisite encouraged by rural life. Organizing ability is developed only to a small extent, for activities which are organized economically, socially, or politically are few in rural life. Sympathy with human aims is usually confined to the individual or family because of the lack of opportunity to participate in a broader life. Trained intelligence has been lacking in the past to a great extent because farming has usually been taught through apprenticeship rather than through the scientific and technical training which has long been given for industries and the professions. Vision and outlook have also been absent because the lack of opportunity to participate in a broader life results in the failure to understand the relation of agriculture to the social organization in general.

Thus far in our analysis the outlook for rural life is dark, but it need not be, for the cue to rural progress is organization. Leaders do not lead individuals as such, except in the case of mobs; they are rather entrepreneurs of organizations. Leadership cannot

<sup>9</sup> Gillette, J. M., *Rural Sociology*, p. 516

function, or even develop, without a conscious organization of people and interests. Rural society must become conscious of its existence, its problems, its possibilities and its aims, it must organize its primary groups on a neighborhood basis, its institutional groups on a community basis, and its economic groups on a market basis, and through these, and others, put itself in a position to participate and cooperate in the larger cultural life possible under modern civilization. This cannot be accomplished by training men and women in the occupational techniques of agriculture alone, they must also be given a knowledge and an understanding both of the management of their economic affairs and of their interdependent economic life. Nor will this training be complete until it gives them a knowledge of their social relationships and provides them with the tools for community and social organization through whose use they can obtain the finer and more greatly desired personal and social satisfactions of modern civilization.

#### QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. What were the most outstanding results of the advent of commercial agriculture on rural civilization?
2. What steps must the farmer take to be successful in an age of commercial farming?
3. Do you consider the outlook for agricultural civilization bright or dark? Give reasons for your answer.
4. How are "agricultural efficiency" and "rural welfare" related? Which is more important to the farmers?
5. Is it an inevitable law of sociology that rural culture shall lag behind urban culture?
6. Almost all of the older countries in the world have developed a rural peasant class. What do you think this country should do in this respect? How can it be done?
7. Are there any assets inherent in rural life which the nation should seek to preserve? If so, how can this be done?

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## INDEX

- Abbott, A D , 312, 442  
 Accidents, on the farm, 434-435  
 Adams, H B , 552  
     J T , 53, 56  
 Agrarian , movements, Chapter XXVIII  
     parties and politics, 625-626  
 Agricultural, college, 23  
     education, 365-366  
     frontier, 13  
     journals, 343-347  
     legislation, 20-21, 689-690  
     marketing Act, 638  
     wheel, 665  
 Agriculture, as a mode of life, 683-685  
     as an enterprise, 212  
     as an occupation, 102-104  
     future of American, 690-694  
     modern, 683-684  
     role in civilization, 682-685  
 Ahmann, C F , 312, 442  
 Aiken, D W , 680  
 Alderman, L R , 369  
 Allen, H S , 131  
 Alliance, Farmers', 3, 626, 628, 633-634, 653, 657, 664-665  
 American Country Life Association,  
     Proceedings, 81, 176, 202, 272, 285, 289, 302, 344, 443, 496, 520, 564, 624, 646, 647  
     purpose of, 16  
 American Society of Equity, 662, 667, 673  
 Ancient Order of Cleaners, 666, 671  
 Anderson, H , 623  
 Anderson, W A , 82, 159, 175, 183, 184-186, 190, 191, 193, 194, 202, 251  
 Anderson, W L , 603  
 Andress, J M , 442  
 Andrews, C M , 552, 591  
 Antrim, S B and I A , 369  
 Art, getting into rural life, 399, 523-525  
 Art—(*Continued*)  
     getting rural life into, 525-526  
     need of in rural life, 471  
     objects of, 324, 526-530  
     role of in rural life, 521-522  
     scenic, 526-528  
     social, 528-533  
     special examples, 533-541  
 Arvold, A G , 179-180, 519, 531, 533, 535, 536, 544  
 Atkeson, M M , 288, 323, 338  
 Atkeson, T C , 680  
 Atkinson, R A , 530  
 Attitudes, farmers', 137, 140  
     influence of climate, weather, etc. on, 144-145  
     influence of free lands on, 119  
     of rural youth, 296-301  
     religious, 145  
     work, 295  
 Atwater, H W , 202  
 Automobiles, influence in community meetings, 216  
     mode of transportation, 214-216  
     number in United States, 214  
 Ayer, N W , and son, 343  
 Bailey, I M , 315  
 Bailey, L H , 15, 161, 339, 369, 512, 697  
 Baker, O E , 81, 82, 87, 249  
 Baldwin, B T , 312, 420-421, 442  
 Barnes, F W , 199  
 Barnes, W D , 492  
 Barrett, C S , 680  
 Bassett, J S , 53  
 Bates, C B , 339  
 Baucher, H S , 519  
 Bayer, J W , 588  
 Beard, A F , 495  
 Beck, P G , 443  
 Belting, P E , 389, 414  
 Benedict, A E , 438, 442  
 Bernard, L L , 138, 161, 210, 231, 556  
 Betts, G H , 389, 398, 414



- Betts, M C , 339  
 Bing, P C , 346, 347  
 Bird, C S , 602  
 Bizzell, W B , 135, 247, 266, 653  
 Black, J D , 23, 89, 109, 135, 203, 572, 697  
 Black Death, 49  
 Blauser, I P , 339  
 Bogardus, E S , 147, 151, 156, 231  
 Bordman, C J , 469  
 Borglum, G , 521  
 Boys' and girls' clubs, 517-519  
 Brannon, C O , 256  
 Branson, E C , 133, 523, 524, 564, 602  
 Brested, J H , 29, 32, 33, 41  
 Bricker, G A , 452, 469  
 Brim, O G , 392, 414  
 Brooks, R G , 544  
 Brown, F L , 199  
 Brown, M A , 438, 442  
 Bruce, A A , 629, 680  
 Bruère, R W , 404-406, 414  
 Brunner, E de S , 37, 73, 84, 88, 160, 258, 447, 450, 451, 455, 459, 461, 464, 465, 467, 468, 469, 478, 485, 515, 593, 598, 602, 604, 610, 616, 623  
 Buck, S J , 627, 628, 652, 657, 664, 680  
 Buick, M D , 231  
 Burgess, E W , 146, 151  
 Burnham, E , 414  
 Burr, W , 88, 516, 564, 585, 588, 602, 623  
 Burritt, M C , 369, 568, 680  
 Burt, H J , 296, 313, 588  
 Butterfield, K L , 4, 23, 136, 137, 272, 495, 568, 697  
 Butterworth, J E , 414  
 Bush, B L , 339  
 Business, methods on farm, 197  
     relation of farming to others, 22  
 Business Mens' Commission on Agriculture, 23  
 Byrne, H A , 288  
  
 Campbell, M , 389, 697  
 Campbell, Olive D , 412  
 Capper, A , 634, 652  
 Capper-Ketcham Act, 364, 637  
 Carney, M , 388, 569  
 Carr, L F , 697  
 Carter, H S , 219  
  
 Carver, T N , 23, 88, 109, 161, 203, 231, 289, 389, 519, 652  
 Case, N C M , 624  
 Cato, 36-39  
 Cawood, M , 618, 623  
 Channing, A , 304  
 Chapin, R C , 173, 203  
 Chautauqua, 214, 341, 367, 511  
 Chesterton, G K , 653  
 Child labor, 301, 307  
     life on the farm, 19  
 Children, charter of, 292-294  
     number of rural, 281, 290-292  
     organizations and agencies of, 309-313  
     physical defects of, 419-420  
     problems of, 296-307  
     rights of, 292-295, 308-309  
 Church and churches, abandonment, 451-453  
     adequate, Chapter XX  
     as community center, 575-576  
     a social institution, 477-478  
     attendance, 450-451  
     changing, 491-495  
     equipment, 460-462  
     financial support, 465-466  
     function of, 445-447  
     leadership, 456-458, 462-465, 471-477, 487-488  
     membership, 448-450, 466-468  
     par-standard, 478-484  
     play in connection with, 515-517  
     programs, 458-460, 489-490  
     sectarianism, 454-456, 471-473  
     status of, 447-453  
     too many, 473  
     united and federated, 482-487  
     weaknesses of, 453-468  
 Clark, B , 537  
 Class consciousness, of farmers, 136, 625, 653, 658-659  
 Clopper, E N , 288, 312, 507, 519  
 Coen, B F , 203  
 Colleges, denominational, 457-458  
     land Grant, 23  
 Collings, P , 451  
 Collins, G B , 433  
 Communication, agencies of, 211-229  
     significance in rural life, 209, 695  
 Community, buildings, 573-577  
     centers, 573-577  
     conflicts, 585-586

- Community—(*Continued*)  
 constructed, 132-134, 572  
 controls, 561-562  
 councils, 569-570  
 definition of, 560  
 disintegration, 562-563  
 early American, 551-552  
 forms of organization, 577-585  
 incorporated, 570-572  
 integration, 563-564  
 movement, 553, 578-579  
 need of larger rural, 559-560  
 pioneer, 557  
 processes, 554-558, 584-587  
 stages in organization, 566-573  
 technique, 586  
 universality of, 549-551  
 village, 604-611
- Conflicts, between children and parents, 299-301  
 class, 659-660  
 community, 585-586  
 land values and rural standard of living, 132  
 urban-rural, 611-616
- Contacts, closer urban-rural, 10, 559-560  
 increased, 18, 207, 231
- Cook, J H, 406-407, 569  
 Cook, K N, 381  
 Cooley, C H, 157, 554, 556, 695  
 Cooper, W J, 414
- Cooperation, as "rural problem," 7-8  
 enterprises, 567-568  
 in marketing, 674-680  
 urban-rural, 616-622
- Copeland, M T, 155
- Corn Belt, 318-325, 329-331  
 Cotton Belt, 318-325, 329-331
- Country Life Commission, American, 15, 23
- Country weekly, 227, 347-350
- Crocheron, B H, 568
- Cropper system, 106, 245, 263
- Crowe, M. F., 273, 288, 302, 312, 519
- Cubberley, E P, 380, 389, 395
- Culture, beginning of American rural, 51-55  
 complex, 191-192, 194-196  
 lag, 697  
 traits, 152-153, 192-194
- Culturization, 151-153
- Curtis, H S, 519  
 Curtler, W H R, 56
- Dana, M, 492, 495  
 Daniels, A M, 339  
 Davenport, C B, 418, 442  
 Davis, E E, 257, 386  
 Davis, W. S., 35  
 Davisman, A J, 588  
 Dean, J O, 443  
 Death rates, 416-419, 421-422  
 Dennis, W V, 312  
 Denune, P P, 623  
 Dinwiddie, C, 438  
 Divorce, 269, 279  
 Doherty, W, 442  
 Douglas, H P, 312, 469, 495, 515, 571, 591, 601, 602, 617, 646  
 Drama, 532-540  
 Drebert, E, 442  
 Dudgeon, M S, 355, 358
- Earp, E L, 564  
 East, E M, 12, 692, 697  
 Eastman, E R, 23, 214, 698
- Economy, collectional, 24, 25  
 cultural nomadic, 24, 25  
 metropolitan, 24, 26  
 national, 24  
 settled village, 24, 25  
 town, 24, 25
- Education, adult, 408-413  
 agencies of, 341  
 agricultural, 342-343  
 by the press, 343-350  
 by radio, 226-227  
 high-school, 405-406  
 purpose of rural, 340-343  
 rural, Chapter XV  
 through demonstration, 359-364  
 vocational, 365-366, 395-397
- Efficiency, Agricultural, 691-694  
 from farmers' point of view, 691, 692  
 from national point of view, 692-694  
 problem of rural, 20-22  
 relation to welfare, 16-17, 196, 197, 691-694
- Eggleston, J P, 404-406, 414  
 Ellwood, C A, 157  
 Elting, I, 552  
 Ely, R T, 126, 135  
 Enclosure system, 49

- Engel, F., 173-175  
 Environment, stultifying factors in rural, 18  
 Everitt, J. A., 680  
 Extension, agricultural, 283-285, 417-418  
     education, 359-364  
 Faber, H., 620  
 Fairlie, J. A., 652  
 Fairs, 366-367, 567  
 Falk, I. S., 442  
 Family, Chapter XII  
     an economic unit, 271-272  
     a social institution, 268-269  
     a social unit, 269-271  
     ideals for, 686-688  
     improvement of, 279-286  
 Familyism, 278, 279, 295  
 Farm, self-sufficient, 684, 685  
     work, 22  
 "Farm Bloc," 634-636  
 Farm Bureau, agency of rural welfare, 15  
     in politics, 634  
     movement, 668-670  
 Farm relief, 20-21, 689-690  
 Farmer-Labor Party, 631, 653, 673  
 Farmers' Equity Union, 667-668  
 Farmers' Movement, Chapter XXVIII  
     and farmers' organizations, 661-671  
     and agricultural cooperatives, 674-680  
     definition, 656-657  
     how operates, 657-661  
     present tendencies of, 673-674  
 Farmers' Mutual Benefit Association, 665  
 Farmers' platform, 655  
 Farmers' Union, agency of rural welfare, 15  
     in politics, 626  
     movement, 657, 666-667, 671  
 Farmer's wife, the, 287  
 Farming, as a business, 89, 685-687  
     as a mode of life, 90  
     as a national enterprise, 685-687  
     as an occupation, 102-104, 303  
 Farwell, P. T., 602  
 Fenn, D. W., 215  
 Fillmore, E. A., 312, 420-421  
 Fisher, C. B., 680  
 Fiske, G. W., 569  
 Foght, H. W., 377, 389  
 Follett, M. P., 156, 158, 554  
 Ford, W. E., 257  
 Foster, R. G., 289, 313, 519  
 Frame, N. T., 623  
 Frayser, M. E., 203, 312, 315, 442, 545  
 Fry, C. L., 449, 457, 462, 469, 596, 597, 603  
 Frysinger, G., 285, 288  
 Funk, W. C., 203  
 Galpin, C. J., 26, 29, 42, 56, 88, 96, 108, 144, 161, 203, 288, 389, 469, 495, 524, 525, 545, 561-562, 564, 574, 576, 577, 588, 603, 604, 608, 618, 623, 642, 652  
 Garnett, W. E., 312, 456, 469, 475  
 Gaston, H. E., 629, 681  
 Gee, W., 82, 203, 288  
 Geer, C. M., 492  
 George, H., 135  
 Gibbs, W. S., 199, 203  
 Gilbreth, L., 288  
 Gill, C. O., 449, 451, 459, 460, 466, 469, 473, 502  
 Gillette, J. M., 76, 88, 108, 128, 135, 137, 161, 231, 266, 273, 288, 389, 442, 495, 564, 588, 596, 603, 696, 698  
 Ginsberg, M., 29  
 Glueck, E. T., 374  
 Goldenweiser, E. A., 241, 242, 248, 260, 266  
 Government, local, 640-651  
     national, 632-638  
     state, 638-640  
     the farmer and, Chapter XXVII  
 Graham, C. A., 411  
 Grange, agency of rural welfare, 15  
     and politics, 626-627, 633  
     movement, 653-655, 657, 662-664, 671  
 Gras, E. C., 56, 188  
 Gras, N. S. B., 24, 25, 26, 28, 36, 38, 41, 56, 266, 682, 698  
 Gray, G., 339  
 Gray, L. C., 135, 256, 572, 654  
 Greenback Party, 628, 630  
 Gries, J. M., 334  
 Groups, derivative or secondary, 230, 563  
     primary, 230, 556-557, 697  
     special interest, 579-587

- Groves, E R, 136, 161, 277, 278, 289  
 Guild, C St C., 442
- Hadley, L, 312, 420-421  
 Hamilton, C H, 456, 469, 475  
 Hamsun, K, 142, 143  
 Hargreaves, J R, 569  
 Hart, J K, 414, 554, 564  
 Hatch Act, 637  
 Hawley, E, 203  
 Hawthorn, H B, 109, 138, 161, 203, 210, 231, 564  
 Hayes, A W, 88, 109, 139, 161, 203, 231, 256, 289, 369, 374, 389, 405, 414, 443, 469, 495, 514, 564, 568, 575, 588, 618, 623, 652, 698  
 Haynes, F E, 681  
 Health, and farm work, 433-434  
   comparison of urban and rural, 416-423  
   demonstrations, 436-440  
   mental, 423-425  
   notions about, 415-416  
   public, 440-442  
   rural advantages and disadvantages, 220, 307-309, 416  
   school, 435  
 Hibbard, B H, 135, 681  
 Hicks, J D, 634, 681  
 Hieronymus, R E, 525  
 Hill, L S, 505  
 Hired man, 93, 105, 106, 107  
 Hoag, E F, 564  
 Hobhouse, L, 29  
 Hoffer, C R, 443, 618, 623  
 Hoffman, F L, 421, 434, 443  
 Holbert, B, 339  
 Holmes, G K, 109  
 Home, *see* family  
 Home conveniences, 253, 325-327, 330-332  
 Hood, R, 676, 677  
 Hooker, E R, 495  
 Hospitals, patients admitted to, 424-426  
   rural, 436-440  
 House, as object of art, 323, 527-528  
   good and bad, 333-337  
   score card, 334-338  
   standards, 316-317, 334-335  
   the farm, 314-322  
 Howe, F C, 256  
 Howells, O, 564, 624
- Hoyt, E E, 203  
 Hughes, G S, 604, 616  
 Hummel, B L, 580-584, 588
- Ideals, church must develop, 471  
 Illiteracy, 370-371  
 Immigrants, 70-75  
 Individualism, 230-231  
 Industrial revolution, 49-51, 684-685  
 Industrialization, 5  
 Insanity, 416  
 Interurbans, 208, 213-214  
 Irvine, H D, 44, 56  
 Isolation, Chapter X  
   as rural problem, 7  
   influence on personality, 146, 147  
   influence on recreation, 509-511  
   problem of, Chapter VII
- Israel, H, 496
- James, L A, 608  
 Jefferson, L P, 256  
 Jennings, H S, 498  
 Jensen, A S, 373  
 Johnson, G E, 519  
 Johnson, O R, 257  
 Johnson, P E, 624  
 Jones, A J, 451  
 Jordan, S M, 567
- Kile, O M, 568, 681  
 Kirkpatrick, A M, 376  
 Kirkpatrick, E L, 169, 170, 174, 175, 182, 184, 194, 200, 201, 203, 231, 206, 315  
 Knapp, S A, 360  
 Koch, F, 532, 537, 545  
 Kolb, J H, 37, 84, 88, 231, 469, 496, 519, 562, 564, 574, 577, 578, 579, 588, 593, 598, 602, 609, 623  
 Kropotkin, P, 43  
 Kumlien, W F, 161, 312, 443  
 Kyrk, H, 203
- Labor, Chapter V  
   domestic, 96, 100  
   manual, 96, 103, 148  
   organizations, 105  
   seasonal demands, 102, 106  
   sources of farm, 94, 95, 101  
   standards, 101-102  
 Laborers, farm, 93, 105-107  
 La Camp, I R, 456,

- La Follette, 631  
 Laidler, H. W., 116, 135  
 Lamoureaux, V. B., 443  
 Land, and community social structure,  
     111-116  
     and society, Chapter VI  
     disposal of, 118-122  
     national policy, 124-132, 176-180  
     ownership, 131-132  
     peculiar influence in United States,  
         116-118  
     present situation, 122-124  
     reclamation, 125-131, 243-245  
     settlements, 133  
     State policies, 126-131  
     utilization Conference, 129-131  
 Landis, B. Y., 356, 411, 496, 568  
 Lantis, L. O., 568  
 Leadership, and progress, 696-699  
     church, 456-458, 462-465, 471-477,  
         487-488  
     community, 586-587  
 Le Bon, G., 154  
 Lee, J., 497, 519  
 Lehmann, E. W., 355, 427, 443  
 Leisure, 92, 93, 95, 100, 377-378, 500,  
     541-545  
 Le Play, F., 169  
 Libraries, 341, 355-359  
 Lindemann, E. C., 445, 511, 553, 564,  
     588  
 Linstrom, D. C., 519  
 Lippmann, W., 157  
 Lively, C. E., 82, 203, 443, 452, 464,  
     469, 517, 519, 588  
 Lloyd, O. G., 242  
 Long, H. C., 357, 359  
 Loomis, C. P., 82  
 Louisiana Farmers' Union, 665  
 Love, A. G., 418  
 Lowden, F. O., 650  
 Lumsden, L. L., 427, 430, 443  
 Lundquist, G. A., 88, 109, 161, 203,  
     231, 289, 389, 519, 652  
 Lutz, H. L., 644  
  
 MacGowan, K., 545  
 Machines, labor-saving, 97-101  
 Mackaye, B., 120  
 MacKinsie, H. K., 109  
 MacRae, H., 134  
 McBride, G. M., 112  
 McClenahan, B. A., 570, 588  
 McCuen, G. W., 339  
 McCulloch, R. W., 496  
 McIntire, R., 303  
 McKay, H., 203  
 McLaughlin, H. W., 496  
 McLear, A. B., 552  
 McVey, F. L., 681  
 Magnusson, L., 122  
 Matland, F. W., 45, 56  
 Mann, A. R., 176-177  
 Manny, T. B., 641-644, 652, 698  
 Manorial system, 47-48  
 Marriages, 269, 276-278  
 Martin, O. B., 369  
 Matthaei, L. E., 99, 109  
 Mead, E., 126, 135, 267, 572  
 Mears, E. G., 676  
 Melvin, B. L., 61, 62, 88, 603, 624  
 Migration, causes of, 82-84  
     of agricultural workers, 304-306  
     rural, 4-5, 9-10, 75-86  
 Miller, E. E., 624  
 Miller, H. E., 443  
 Miller, Nora, 297-301  
 Moore, H. H., 432  
 Morality, church leadership in, 471-  
     477  
     hired man's, 106  
     of rural people, 459-460, 471-477  
     village, 601  
 Morehouse, E., 125, 135  
 Morgan, E. L., 296, 313, 564, 570, 578,  
     588, 624  
 Morgan, J. S., 567  
 Morgan, W. S., 681  
 Morrill Act, 637  
 Morris, Mrs. E. C., 411  
 Morrison, F. L., 109  
 Morse, H. N., 447, 450, 455, 459, 461,  
     464, 468, 469, 478  
 Morse, R., 576  
 Mulford, F. S., 339  
 Mumford, E., 543  
 Mumford, H. M., 624  
 Mustard, H. S., 438  
  
 Nason, W. C., 440, 443, 519, 576, 588,  
     622, 624  
 National, agricultural organizations,  
     Chapter XXVIII  
     efficiency, 20-21, 691-697  
     Government and farmer, 632-638

## National—(Continued)

- Industrial Conference Board, 23
- policies, 124-131, 176-180, 690-694
- Negroes, Art, 538, 71, 73, 96
- education, 382, 387-389
- ministers, 457
- population, 70-75
- Nelson, L. A., 564, 588, 624
- Newspapers, as means of communication, 227-228
- conspicuous cases in rural homes, 228
- weeklies, 227, 347-350
- Non-Partisan League, 626, 629, 657, 670, 673

## Occupation, desires, 298

- farming a solitary, 103
- farming not a dangerous, 104
- gainfully employed, 303
- influence of farming on others, 22
- influence on personality, 103-104
- seasonal, 102

Ogburn, W. F., 203, 277, 278, 632

Ogg, F. A., 49

Ogg, T. R., 219

Old Testament, 32-33

Oliver, E. W., 339

O'Neill, E., 142

Ormond, J. M., 258, 455, 463, 469

Page, J. F., 456, 624

Pageants, rural, 530-532

Parent-Teacher Association, 378

Park, R. E., 146

Patten, M., 604, 616

Pearson, F. A., 23

Peck, F. W., 204

Peoples, A., 443

Periam, J., 654

Perry, C. A., 519

Personality, characteristics of rural people, 230-231

- developed in the home, 268-271, 281, 293, 295, 297-299, 391

- developed through contacts, 207

Phelan, J., 231, 469, 505, 522

Pinchot, G., 449, 451, 459, 460, 473

Play, *see* Recreation

Politics, farmer, 625-638

Population, American Colonial, 53

- composition of rural, 65-75

- movement of, 54-55, 75-86

## Population—(Continued)

- national, 57, 59
- per cent urban and rural, 64
- rural farm, 60-64
- rural non-farm, 60-63
- urban, 57-64
- village, 60-63, 596-598
- Populist Party, 660
- President's Commission, on Home Building and Home Ownership, 280, 283, 284, 305, 316-321, 431, 443, 600
- on Child Health and Protection, 292, 294, 303, 307-313
- Preston, Mrs. J. C., 374
- Production, issue for discussion, 14
- per acre and per man, 4
- Progress, tests of, 694-697
- Psychology, changing farmers', 158-160
- mob, 154, 155
- of farm life, Chapter VII
- of farmers' thought processes, 141-144, 147-150
- of standard of living, 191
- social, 137-140, 150-158
- Public, farmer and, 155-158
- opinion, 157-158
- platform, 367, 368
- Pugsley, C. W., 698
- Purnell Act, 637

Quick, H., 6, 23, 698

Radio, 208, 225-227

Railroads, 208, 213, 217

Rainwater, C. E., 520

Rankin, J. O., 204, 252, 267, 315, 329, 350, 369, 432, 520

Rapeer, L. W., 414

Rapping, A. H., 545

Reading materials in the farm homes, 228, 254, 350-357

Recreation, adequate rural programs, 511-512

- agencies promoting, 512-519

- characteristics of present, 510-511

- choices of, 503-505

- different from amusement, 497-498

- evolution of, 508-512

- getting into rural life, 506-508

- lack of organized, 296

- mental values of, 499, 501

Recreation—(*Continued*)

- moral values of, 499-500
- need of in rural life, 299, 500-506
- of pioneers, 508-510
- physical values of, 498-499
- role of in life, 497-500
- social values of, 499, 501-505
- Reese, M. J., 198-199, 204, 289, 313, 339
- Religion, Chapter XX
  - adequate rural program of, Chapter XX
  - and church, 446-447
- R. F. D., as agency of communication, 221, 222
  - growth of, 222-223
- Ribhany, A. M., 144
- Rice, S. A., 626, 652, 681
- Rise and nature of, Chapter I
- Roads, 215, 216-221
- Roberts, A. E., 496
- Rockefeller, J. D., Jr., 493
- Rockwell, E. T., 539
- Rolvaag, O. E., 289
- Roosevelt Commission on Country Life, 16, 23, 176
- Roosevelt, F. D., 650
- Rorem, C. R., 443
- Ross, E. A., 231, 232
- Ross, E. D., 23, 85, 135
- Rosseter, W. S., 88
- Rozman, D., 624
- Rural life, ancient, 25, 28-42
  - idealism, 286-287
  - medieval, 43-51
- Russell, C. E., 681
- Russell, G., 545
- Sanders, J. T., 255, 267
- Sanderson, D., 23, 56, 176, 289, 313, 436, 443, 553, 557, 560, 566, 574, 577, 578, 581, 588, 624, 698
- Sanitation, rural, 416, 427-428, 430-433
- Sawtelle, E. H., 204, 289
- Schmidt, L. B., 23, 85
- School, rural, Chapter XVI
  - adult, 410-413
  - as community institution, 373-374, 390, 575
  - as teaching agency, 374-378
  - attendance, 381-382, 403

School—(*Continued*)

- consolidation, 401-411
- curriculum, 375-376, 393
- influence of race cleavage on, 387-389
- influence of tenancy on, 385-386
- instruction in, 383
- leisure time programs of, 377-378, 513-514
- more and better functions required of, 390-401
- recitations, 376-377
- rural division of labor of, 370-373
- supervision, 383-384
- support of, 380-381
- tasks of rural, 370-373
- term, 383
- too small, 379-380, 402
- weakness of rural, 379-384
- Schwantes, A. J., 109
- Seeborn, F., 56
- Self-sufficient farming, 11
- Serfdom, 48-49
- Shambough, B. M. H., 588
- Sharp, W. R., 49
- Sidis, B., 154
- Sims, N. L., 41, 56, 88, 109, 139, 161, 204, 230, 232, 289, 369, 389, 414, 470, 496, 565, 588, 603, 624, 652
- Sinat, N., 443
- Small, A. W., 521
- Smuck, A. A., 10, 82
- Smith, C. B., 363, 364, 369
- Smith, E. E., 376
- Smith, Ruby Green, 302, 698
- Smith, W. C., 161
- Smith Hughes Act, 405-406, 637
- Snedden, D., 414
- Snyder, M. F., 315
- Socialization, defined, 209-210
  - law of, 23
  - results of, 229-230
- Soil fertility, loss of, 12
- Sorokin, P. A., 26, 29, 42, 56, 88, 137, 140, 161, 277, 419-420, 443, 698
- Spillman, W. J., 267
- Standard of Living, Chapters VIII and IX
  - comparison of urban and rural, 168-169
  - conflict with land values, 132
  - defined, 162, 163
  - elements of, 165-168, 314

Standard of Living—(*Continued*)

- general facts about, 163-168
- improving rural, 196-202
- influence of economic factors on, 213
- influence of tenancy on, 181-182
- modification by choice, 198-202
- problem of, 19
- psychology of, 191-192
- statistical measurements of, 163-168, 170-175
- Staples, H. M., 652
- Steen, H., 676, 677
- Steiner, J. F., 557, 565, 585
- Stewart, L. C., 624
- Stouffer, W. H., 203
- Streightoff, F. H., 174, 204
- Stuart, C. W., 410
- Superstitions, 145

- Tacitus, 26, 42, 56
- Taft, L., 522-523, 545
- Talbott, M. W., 204
- Talbott, N. S., 632
- Tannenbaum, F., 135, 147
- Taugh, E. G., 203
- Taylor, A. W., 462-463
- Taylor, Carl C., 180, 183, 188, 189, 204, 228, 246, 248, 250, 253, 255, 256, 257, 259, 267, 314, 327, 344, 348, 351, 354, 355, 369, 385, 427, 432, 459, 508, 544, 562, 565, 574, 577, 578, 589, 607, 617, 624, 661, 678, 681, 698

- Taylor, E. A., 496, 588, 624
- Taylor, H. C., 15, 109, 312, 356
- Taylor, J. S., 334
- Teele, R. P., 128, 135

- Telephone, as agency of communication, 208, 223-225
- growth of rural, to, 224
- influence on community organization, 224-225

## Tenancy, Chapter XI

- a normal step toward ownership, 238-239
- causes of farm, 238-247
- economic consequences of, 247-250
- effects on community life, 255, 259
- effects on social institutions, 255-258, 385-386
- effects on standard of living, 181-182
- hereditary, 259-260

Tenancy—(*Continued*)

- increase in farm, 235-236, 237-238
- land values and, 239-240
- landed estates and, 238-239, 243, 246
- poor agriculture and, 247-250
- rates, 236-237, 243, 244-246, 249
- significance in rural life, 233-244
- social consequence of, 250-260
- solution of, 260-266
- Terpenning, W. A., 470, 565, 589
- Thaden, J. F., 204, 315
- Thomas, W. I., 313
- Thompson, W. S., 88, 277, 278, 578, 692
- Tobrer, M. O., 676
- Tolley, H. R., 4
- Town, *see* Village
- Towse, A. B., 442
- Transportation, development of, 211, 213
- True, A. C., 360, 369
- Truesdell, L. E., 59, 60, 62, 63, 88, 241-242, 248, 260, 266
- Turner, C. E., 433
- Turner, H. A., 267
- Turner, F. J., 85, 117

- United States Department of Agriculture, 15, 16, 119, 215, 341, 431, 638, 692

- Urbanization, causes of, 6
- how to retard, 4
- relation to industrialization, 5-7
- processes, 3-7

- Urban-rural, conflicts, 611-616
- cooperation, 616-622

- Vance, R. B., 153, 195-196, 204
- Van Hise, C. R., 123
- Varro, 36-39, 42
- Vawter, K., 367
- Veblen, T., 154
- Village and villages, agricultural, 592-598
- areas, 606-611
- as a country community, 604-611
- as a social entity, 598-599
- characteristics of, 598-602
- health and sanitation in, 600-601
- housing, 327, 599-600
- number of, 593-594
- part of rural life, 622-623
- planning, 602



- Village and villages—(*Continued*)  
 population, 60-63, 596-598  
 rôle in rural life, 590-592  
 services, 605-606  
 Vincent, G. E., 521  
 Vinogradoff, P., 46-49, 56  
 Visiting, as means of communication,  
 228-229  
 rural family, 229, 258  
 Vogt, P. L., 358, 591, 639  
 Von Tungeln, 267
- Wager, P., 647, 650, 652  
 Wakeley, R. E., 562  
 Wallace, J., 438, 443  
 Wallis, L., 33  
 Warburton, S. R., 454  
 Ward, F. E., 273, 274, 289, 432, 444  
 Warren, G. F., 23  
 Warren, G. M., 339, 431, 444  
 Washington, George, 3, 527  
 Waugh, F. A., 522, 527, 545  
 Weist, E., 652, 681  
 Welfare, agricultural, 691-694  
 church and, 475-476  
 institutions and agencies, 15  
 relation to efficiency, 16-17  
 Wells, A. T., 199  
 Wertenbaker, T. J., 52, 53, 54, 55, 56  
 Wescott, G., 289  
 Wheeler, G., 29  
 Whelpton, P. K., 77  
 Wileden, A. F., 231, 539, 540, 579,  
 588  
 Wilkinson, G., 30  
 Willard, J. D., 356, 359, 410-411
- Wiley, M. M., 232, 350, 369  
 Williams, G. H., 389  
 Williams, J. M., 141, 145, 161, 232,  
 289  
 Williams, M. P., 520  
 Wilson, Maude, 204, 274  
 Wilson, M. C., 310, 311, 369  
 Wilson, W. H., 470, 496, 502, 569, 576,  
 577  
 Wissler, C., 152, 193  
 Withers, H. E., 339  
 Women, household duties of, 100, 274,  
 280  
 status of farm, 272-276  
 Wood, T. D., 419  
 Woodhouse, C. G., 204
- Xenophon, *Anabasis*, 35, 42
- Y. M. C. A., 368, 490-491, 516  
 Yoder, F. R., 10, 82, 109, 246, 253,  
 259, 385, 427, 459, 496, 588, 624  
 Young, E. C., 83  
 Youth, *see* Children  
 Y. W. C. A., 368, 491
- Zimmerman, C. C., 26, 29, 42, 56, 83,  
 88, 137, 140, 161, 169, 183, 188,  
 204, 246, 250, 253, 255, 256, 257,  
 266, 277, 314, 327, 385, 419-420,  
 427, 429, 432, 459, 496, 508, 565,  
 574, 578, 589, 603, 607, 616, 624,  
 691, 698  
 Zinthe, C. J., 98, 109  
 Zymbrunnen, A. C., 569















